ISSUE №9 JUNE/JULY 1988 £1·25

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THE MONSTER SQUAD AND PRISON Previewed

H. R. GIGER– Interviewed

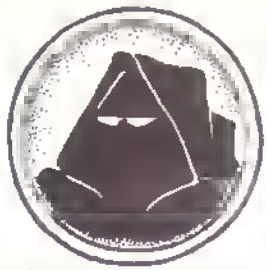
HAMMER

SPECIAL

PLUS: FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN...DEAD OF NIGHT...MURDER ROCK...RAWHEAD REX...

ISSUE №9 JUNE/JULY 1988

SAM HAIN



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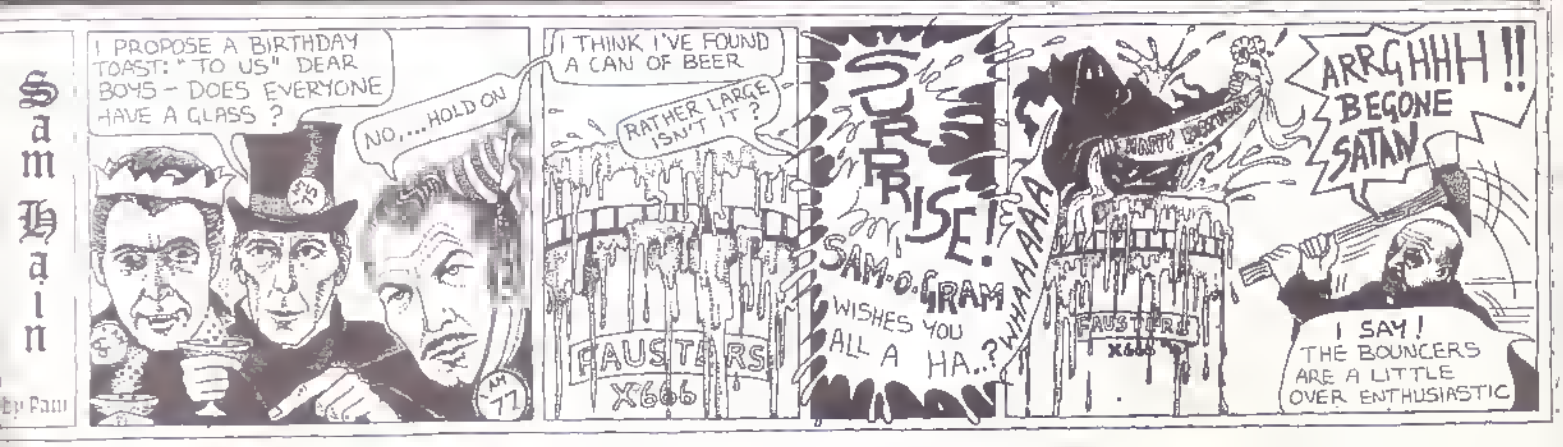
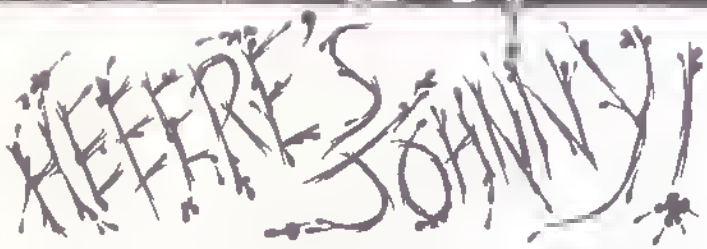

Sam Hain
by Pam
I PROPOSE A BIRTHDAY TOAST: "TO US" DEAR BOYS - DOES EVERYONE HAVE A GLASS ?
NO,...HOLD ON
I THINK I'VE FOUND A CAN OF BEER
RATHER LARGE ISN'T IT ?
FAUSTERS X666
SURPRISE!
SAM-O-GRAM WISHES YOU ALL A HA..?
WHAAAAAA
FAUSTERS X666
ARRGHHH !!
BEGONE SATAN
I SAY ! THE BOUNCERS ARE A LITTLE OVER ENTHUSIASTIC



HAMMER films have always held a very special place in my heart so it's with great pleasure that I welcome you to the SAMHAIN Hammer Special. Not that we needed an excuse to run the features but with Fred Dekker's THE MONSTER SQUAD opening in July and Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee both celebrating their birthdays this month, now seems as good a time as any to take a look back at the studio that gave Britain a heritage of horror.

THE MONSTER SQUAD unites Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, The Mummy, The Wolf Man and The Gill Man (that's him on our cover) in a delightfully Spielbergian tale about a group of monster fans who come face to face with the big five. With the exception of The Gill Man you'll find Hammer's variations of all the above monsters are featured in our special section which includes a much-requested article on the films of Terence Fisher. Despite the popularity of our past features on the likes of D'Amato, Franco and Argento it would seem that Fisher is the man many of you want to read about and over the next couple of issues Kevin Lyons will be tracing the career of the man responsible for many of Hammer's finest movies.

Back in the days of HALLS OF HORROR, MONSTER MAG and WORLD OF HORROR it would be cliched to look back at Hammer but with today's emphasis firmly on the likes of Romero, Cronenberg, Argento and the more obscure exploitation directors, it seems Hammer, Universal, RKO, Amicus etc have all but been forgotten and we'll be aiming to rectify that in future issues.

It's our intention, as it always has been, to treat both the old and the new, the mainstream and the obscure, with equal coverage, so whether your tastes lie with the films of James Whale or those of Aristide Massaccesi, SAMHAIN is the mag for you.

And if you enjoy SAMHAIN then I think it's a safe bet that you're going to enjoy FEAR, a new publication to be launched by Newsfield that could well rival FANGORIA in the glossy horror mag stakes and the great thing about it is that it's British. FEAR will be bi-monthly, full colour and a massive 68 pages each issue. Editor John Gilbert informs me that their coverage will be split evenly between film, fiction and video with the likes of Shaun Hutson and Ramsey Campbell contributing original fiction.

But perhaps the most interesting thing about FEAR is that it will be available in W.H. Smith of all places. That's right, the chain that refused to stock HALLS OF HORROR have had a change of heart, brought about, it would seem, by their increase in sales of horror books and videos. It'a nice to see they no longer consider horror publications more offensive than the likes of MAYFAIR and MEN ONLY (which I'm told they stock!) although I can't profess to agreeing with the motives behind their change of heart. FEAR will carry a cover price of £2.50 and we all wish them the best of luck when the first issue hits the streets on June 16.

While FEAR is a glossy publication it's still encouraging to note the ever-increasing amount of horror fanzines that are emerging, almost weekly it seems. Indeed, there are more around today than at any other time I can remember and this interest seems to be reflected in the media. You may have seen the recent feature MELODY MAKER ran on splatter zines and if you live in the TSW area you may have even seen yours truly on TELEVIEWS plugging SAM. Even Barry Norman devoted a feature in FILM 88 to the appeal of horror films (see SAM'S SNIPPETS) although the tone of the piece was, to say the least, predictable.

And finally.....I see from May 15th's SUNDAY SPORT that Tory MP Geoffrey Dickens has demanded the prosecution of rock band The Shamen. Apparently they had all their mail stamped "JESUS IS A LIE." Assuming this is a democratic society we shall continue to frank our mail with the legend "SAM HAIN IS IMMORTAL!" which is definitely no lie!
JOHN GULLIDGE (May '88)

BACK ISSUES

ISSUE 1 includes: DAVID CRONENBERG, missing scenes from Karloff's FRANKENSTEIN, THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE.
ISSUE 2 includes: RAMSEY CAMPBELL interview, JOHN CARPENTER, H.P. LOVECRAFT, THE FLY, Kate Bush's EXPERIMENT IV, VAMP.
ISSUE 3 includes: SAM RAIMI and BRUCE CAMPBELL interview, DAVID LYNCH, RAMSEY CAMPBELL, cannibal movies, ALICE COOPER.
ISSUE 4 includes: CLIVE BARKER interview, THE SHINING, WES CRAVEN, Fulci's zombie films, TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2.
ISSUE 5 includes: ROBERT ENGLUND interview, THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK, JESUS FRANCO, TV censorship, more cannibal movies.
ISSUE 6 includes: SHAUN HUTSON interview, ROBOCOP, BORIS KARLOFF, CREEPSHOW 2, FRANKENSTEIN, ARGENTO, BRIAN DE PALMA.
ISSUE 7 includes: DREAM DEMON set report, THE LOST BOYS, NEAR DARK, EDGAR ALLAN POE, PREDATOR, THE STEPFATHER, ARGENTO.
ISSUE 8 includes: HELLRAISER II set report, NANCY ALLEN interview, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, CARRIE The musical, ARGENTO.

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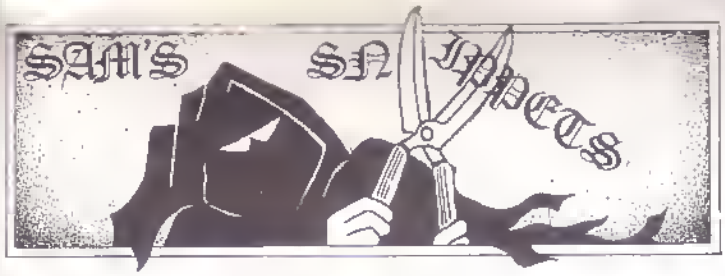
This issue is dedicated to the memory of Kenneth Williams.



IT's certainly the merry month of May for horror's big three stars who all celebrate their birthdays in the space of two days. Peter Cushing (whose latest autobiographical volume is reviewed on page 29) was 75 on May 26, the day before Vincent Price hit 77 and Christopher Lee reached the tender age of 66. Other genre celebs who are celebrating (or would be if they were still alive) birthdays in the next couple of months, include: Irwin Allen (June 12), Basil Rathbone (June 13), Peter Lorre (June 26), Lucio Fulci (June 27), Janet Leigh (July 6), Tod Browning (July 12), James Whale (July 22) and Mario Bava (July 31). Happy birthday one and all.....

BARRY Norman has never made any secret of his aversion to horror films but his report on the subject in April 11th's FILM 88 plumbed new depths of bigotry and sheer stupidity. Bazza started by waving a copy of Chas Balun's DEEP RED at us and announcing that he was going to investigate horror's "strange appeal". Why strange? And why, with the current boom in British horror publications, couldn't he be bothered to find something home-grown to wave at us?

Just in case anyone was still in any doubt about his attitude, Norman sneered that horror films have some limited value because "they occasionally act as a training ground for directors who go on to much better things" so just what does he make of the likes of Kubrick making THE SHINING? Alexander Walker was wheeled on to complain that horror films "increasingly resemble things that are made for the operating theatre" and belly-ache about the NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET films. Complaining that the film makes a culture hero out of a child-molestor who kills young people he went on to imply that pre-teens are the principal victims in the film (not true of course) and completely overlooked the fact that the audience is encouraged to root for the victims and not their tormentor.

Stills from Universal films were flashed on the screen as Norman commented that in the past horror films used a more subtle approach, overlooking the fact that all these films were viewed in their day as being beyond the pale. Then Walker weighed in with another mind-boggling observation - "Film-makers used to take care to frighten you. Nowadays - for instance in Clive Barker's HELLRAISER - they can't wait to pull the corpses apart, to deconstruct them in ever more horrific and slimy forms." Sounds pretty frightening to me Alexander. Also sounds very much like the perennial Frankenstein story rather than some new departure. This woeful lack of any historical grasp on the subject continued with Norman's assertion that explicit visceral horror began with THE EXORCIST (1973). Has he never heard of BLOOD FEAST (1963)? Come to think of it, no he probably hasn't.

Clive Barker was shown arguing strenuously that horror fans are not depraved weirdos, just regular people, but his words were totally lost on Norman, who wound up by announcing himself amazed that such a nice guy could be involved in the genre.....

Ironically, whoever re-edited the show for its Wednesday afternoon repeat deleted a scene from THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING, an earnest drama that Norman had heaped praise upon, but left all the clips from nasty, scummy horror films intact.....

HOW come the tag line for HELLRAISER 2: HELLBOUND reads "Beyond the limits" when the original film was hyped with the line "There are no limits"? But you ain't heard nothing yet - New World wanted HELLRAISER's promotional material to bear the legend "Satan's done waitin'"!!! And talking of HELLRAISER, main man Clive Barker was offered the directorial reins on GREMLINS 2 but, surprise, surprise...turned them down.....

SAMHAINIANS in the Birmingham area may be interested to know that Wide Angle, a group specialising in offering skilled training in video and photography, are putting on a short four-film horror season in June. Wide Angle have recently moved into the realm of film study to complement their practical work and the season is linked to this aspect of their work. The four films are: Mario Bava's EVIL EYE (June 6), TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (June 13), FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED (June 20) and Argento's FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET (June 27). Further details can be obtained from: WIDE ANGLE, BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, JENKINS STREET, SMALL HEATH, BIRMINGHAM B10 0HQ or telephone 021 772-2889.....

AND talking of film seasons... Samhainians in the London area should hot-foot it down to the National Film Theatre where they are showing a month long season of films of Wes Craven including the controversial LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET's I and III and the two HILLS HAVE EYES films. The season concludes on June 28 with The Guardian Event - THE FINAL CUT: CENSORSHIP IN 1988, a panel discussion covering issues raised by the films in the season. Full details can be obtained from the National Film Theatre and for further reading check out our feature on the films of Wes Craven in SAM 4.....

SHEFFIELD'S blind labour MP David Blunkett called for a ban on Alice Cooper after the first date of his 1988 British tour had 'em fainting in the aisles. The show included a hanging sequence, throat-slittings, disembowellments and baby mutilation - all simulated we hasten to add. At the climax of the 90 minute show, fans in the front row were soaked by gallons of theatrical blood.

"I'm horrified by this man's behaviour" raged Blunkett. "It's an indication of the sick society we're moving into." Sounds to us more like the same act that Alice has been peddling for over 15 years now.

One would have thought that at this moment in time a Labour MP's thoughts would be more usefully directed towards the state of the NHS, the budget that redistributed wealth from the poor to the rich and the upcoming poll tax and security cuts than towards showbiz. Those surely are the proof that the sick society is already here.....

THE London Screenwriters Workshop recently organised two meetings of interest to any Samhianians with screenwriting leanings. March saw Chris Wicking, writer of several Hammer Horrors and also the more recent DREAM DEMON on a panel discussing "Writing SF, Fantasy and Horror for the screen". April found producers Chris Figg (HELLRAISER and HELLBOUND) and Duncan Kenworthy (Jim Henson's THE STORYTELLER TV series currently being screened on Channel 4) talking about their work within the film industry. Involved in setting up and chairing these two events was SAMHAIN's own Jeremy Clarke, a long standing LSW member.

The LSW is an organisation which seeks to promote an awareness of the craft of screenwriting both among writers and within the broader area of the film and TV industries. Membership is a snip at £12 a year and a newsletter is published twice a year. One is out in mid-May and according to Jeremy, who has just taken over editing it, contains a couple of articles which will be of particular interest to Samhainians. Further details, newsletter or membership available from: LONDON SCREENWRITERS WORKSHOP, 37 Victoria Road, Watford, Herts WD2 5AY. Tel: 0923 31342.....

MOVIEDROME, BBC2's season of "cult Movies" (for "cult" read "not new to television") got off to a poor start with the promised "Complete" version of Robin Hardy's remarkable THE WICKER MAN being nothing of the sort. The original running time of the film is 102 minutes while the Beeb's print clocked in at 89 minutes 12 seconds. Even allowing for the quicker running times of films on TV, that still falls far short of the complete version. And why, when Alex Cox admitted at the start, that the film was incomplete, didn't the BBC advertise it as such. Of course when we really wanted to know that a film was being shown in its original form (Channel 4's last screening of the 1931 FRANKENSTEIN) there was no mention in the TV TIMES. Incidentally, other genre films to be shown in the MOVIEDROME season include the original INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS and the original version of THE FLY. Nice to see the BBC unearthing some real rarities!....

COLOURBOX are the video label to watch out for at the moment as they are actively engaged in putting the B back into B Movie with two new releases. First off is Empire's CREEPOZOIDS set in a post-holocaust world inhabited by mutants and roving bands of deserters. Directed by David DeCocteau it has creature FX by the team responsible for GHOULIES. Then on July 8 COLOURBOX are letting loose SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY, also from Empire. Both films were reviewed in SAM 6. Also out on video is Fred Dekker's NIGHT OF THE CREEPS (CBS/Fox). Dekker of course, directed THE MONSTER SQUAD (reviewed on page 8). And full marks to BBC VIDEO who have at long last released the clasic QUATERMASS AND THE PIT, all 178 minutes of its six episodes.....

Lunch Meat

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LOW-BUDGET FILM MAKING
BY KIRK ALEX ~ WRITER/DIRECTOR OF "LUNCHMEAT"

"DEPRAVED, BLOODSUCKING CANNIBALS who roam the San Bernardino Mountains in search of victims! PAW & THE BOYS! BENNY, ELWOOD and HARLEY! Psychotic, meat-eating mutilators who get their kicks by ambushing young men and women, hunt them down, and cold-bloodedly tear their bodies apart!

There's HARLEY, who gets his kicks by chopping off people's heads with his AXE! There's ELWOOD, his younger brother, who likes to DRILL HOLES in his victims with his PICK-AXE! PAW's favourite tool is his stainless steel MACHETE! He gets his thrills by tracking his prey down, taking a couple of swipes with the machete to draw BLOOD, and then likes to see them beg for mercy. He'll move in with a chuckle and CHOP THEM UP into many pieces of BLOOD-DRENCHED MEAT and BONES to be thrown in TRASH BAGS and taken down to the nearest greasy spoon to be sold as lunchmeat!!!

Then there's BENNY! Deaf and dumb and MANIACAL with an insatiable thirst for human blood and raw flesh!!! BENNY does his best work with a shovel!!!"

And that, in a nutshell, is LUNCHMEAT, a chiller/thriller I wrote and directed last year and which is currently out on video in the States where it was the number one B film in Illinois for the month of January.

The film was done on a budget of less than a hundred grand and took 14 days to shoot - however, the entire film, from start to finish (for me) took two and a half years.

Just to give you some information concerning my background - I'm 36 years old right now, I grew up in Chicago and did a stint in Nam (infantry) during '69-'70 and moved out to L.A. in 1972. I'd been kicking around in Tinsel Town for about 16 years, writing screenplays (too numerous to count), plays, short stories, poetry, novels (ten or more); and just got tired of wasting money on postage and getting rejection slips for my sweat and effort. After a while, I just stopped sending stuff out.

While in film school (a place in Hollywood now defunct; no, it wasn't UCLA or USC, I couldn't afford to get into those places even if I'd wanted to) during the early and mid-70's I had made several short films and one about 40 minutes long (non-genre efforts) but that, too, got me nowhere. Afterwards I just resigned myself to continue working hard on the writing and stop sending my stuff out or even allowing others to read anything I'd written; that is until this home-video explosion happened and I thought this was just too good an opportunity to let slip through my hands and not make another, all-out effort to get my foot in the door as a filmmaker! And this I did.

All those years I'd supported myself working dead-end jobs and marking time and writing and reading every chance I got. Eventually I ended up driving a cab (and operating one as a means of supporting the writing) for a period of ten years. I'd bought the cab with a loan, paid the loan off and kept trying to figure out a way to raise just enough money to make a decent chiller/thriller and get some kind of film-making career off the ground, some kind of start, something!

I knew I had to make a break or go nuts if I stayed driving a cab 14, 16 and even 18 hours a day. The cab driving thing, after years of having done it, I could see was easily beginning to chip away at my sanity; I'd lost the one woman I loved due to blues caused by the hack; and fighting off L.A. traffic in 95 degree heat can be a nightmare far worse than any horror film ever made!

CAUTION:
IF DECAPITATIONS CANNIBALISM AN
BRUTAL, SAVAGE ACTS OF SUSPENS
AND GORE TURNS YOUR STOMACH
THIS FILM IS NOT FOR YOU!!"

Making films, being on location, for me, is about the most thrilling experience I'd ever known and I was certain the opportunity I'd been waiting for since 1972 was now (or never)! I sold the cab, wrote the script (that would be entertaining, scary and full of gore effects that could be done for a small amount of money) and invested my own money into the film and this in turn showed the rest of the investors how much faith I had in the project and they joined in.

As I mentioned, it was done on a shoestring budget; there was no money for permits or insurance (nothing fancy like that); no money for a catering service, just hardly enough for film and food and about the cheapest (although gruesome enough for the hardcore genre fan) make-up effects we could come up with.

Even though the film was not a big budget affair, we all did our best with what was available. I know that I put my heart into every frame that you see on the screen. It took me three months to edit the film, which was followed by eight months of post production work that I went through with the producer, etc.

My plan right now is to raise enough money for my next directorial effort titled: THE BUTCHER NEXT DOOR to be produced by my friend Arthur Biederman and to be able to afford to do all the things I could not afford to do on LUNCHMEAT. to have the luxury of being able to carry out all my shots as planned during pre-production, to be able to hire a very good DP and sound man, etc., to be able to afford insurance and permits so that I won't have to worry about L.A. cops coming after my actors and film crew with M-16's in the middle of a sceen (even though we happen to be clearly making a movie with fake blood and all that other good stuff)!

Yes, that kept happening to us all the way through the shoot! That is a dream of mine to be left alone by the police to make a film with peace of mind and not have to worry about an over-zealous SWAT TEAM coming at my film crew with weapons!

The L.A. Film Commission keeps wondering why so many film companies keep leaving L.A. to make their films elsewhere. Well, this is exactly what is happening - low budget (really no-budget) filmmakers like myself don't stand a chance. For crying out loud, don't they realize that if I had the money I would not mind paying their lousy fee? But when all you can do is put enough funds together just to get your film off the ground - what do you do then? Someone here has to have a little more understanding when it comes down to giving the poverty-row filmmaker a break.

My plan eventually is to move into the bigger (just slightly bigger) budget arena - but that is down the road a bit. Right now I have to do the best that I can with what I've got - and I'm very happy doing that.

BE FLAYED ...

BE VERY FLAYED

"HELLBOUND" MAKE-UP FX DESIGNER GEOFF PORTASS WELCOMES GULLIDGE AND MARTIN TO HIS BLOOD BOUDOIR

Make-up FX artist Geoff Portass' big break came when Nick Maley gave him a week's trial on LIFEFORCE - he ended up staying for the last four months of that film. While working on HIGHLANDER he met Bob Keen, with whom he later formed IMAGE ANIMATIONS. They hired a small work shop at Pinewood and took on various projects including a Kate Bush video, a Crown Plus 2 commercial in which Geoff had to move plaster ducks on a wall, and another one for Amstrad ("with a silver robot and exploding ice cubes - that's one of our skeletons") before being offered HELLRAISER.

Last year IA worked on THE UNHOLY and WAXWORKS in America, and Geoff also did a stint on DREAM DEMONS (see SAM 7). With Bob Keeu directing in the States, Geoff found himself special make-up FX designer on HELLRAISER II: HELLBOUND, which recently wrapped at Pinewood.

He was more than happy to guide us around his workshop loft, cluttered with grisly creatious from both HELLRAISER and also Ken Russell's up-coming LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM, then talk us through his album of snapshots from HELLBOUND, starting with everybody's favourite sadomasochists from beyond the grave, the Cenobites: "One of the suggestlous we made after being given the script concerned Chatterer" said Geoff. "His design has been altered somewhat, largely at the request of Nicholas Vince, the actor who plays him, who complained that he couldn't see anything throughout the first film." This became very important in the sequel, due to sequences such as the one in which Chatterer pursues Kirsty (Ashley Laurence) and her new ally Tiffany (Imogen Boorman) all around the corridors of the full-scale hospital set! (This could have been doue iu a series of cuts ou smaller sets but has greater impact when done in long tracking shots witness the EVIL DEAD films).

"He has a uew mask, a new set of teeth..." continued Geoff, "the whole thing fits a lot better. He looks far more evil now, he looked great in the stuff we shot yesterday - his head has healed up since the first film and the wires that held the wound open now dangle like dreadlocks.

"The make up for the female Cenobite is virtually identical, though it's a different actress (Barbie Wilde) this time. She's a bit shorter...and more of a pain in the arse! No, to be fair, it's a hell of a thing to wear - it's hot and heavy, she could hardly move her head...we just put this stuff on her on the first day and she nearly fainted. She got used to it eventually."

Butterball and Pinhead are unchanged from last time but, as explained in our last issue, there is a new Cenobite - Dr. Channard (Kenneth Cranham), head of the psychiatric institute in which Kirsty finds herself, is transformed by his occult delvings into one of the hellish creatures. Geoff explained: "The starting point for his design was your average household egg slicer. We fitted him with a full head-piece on which wires were attached going through the ears. Then he's picked up by this bloody big tentacle. That's done by a composite of various shots - there's a mechanical tentacle, then a prosthetic head piece that's actually stuck on to him with the tentacles shaped to look as though they're gripping then attached with a little coupling device to a tentacle when he's on a pole-arm - or wires, which were used in one shot."

PREPARING THE INFAMOUS "MATTRESS" SCENE

GEOFF AND FLAYED FRIENDS

As if a new Cenobite were not enough, HELLBOUND reveals the Cenobite's awesome master: Leviathan, the Lord of Hell's Labyrinth, is a magnification of the puzzle boxes that open the portals of Hell, a huge Lament Configuration which is constantly changing and from which various nasty things emerge. "The thing at the centre of Hell was originally going to be a creature" said Geoff "and various designs were considered but we decided we wanted to do something that would be better than just another creature."

Geoff and co. also set themselves the task of topping Frank's emergence from the floorboards in the first film - a tall order, but they think they've achieved it with Julia's rebirth from a mattress. Browning, a deeply disturbed patient played by Oliver Smith (the monster Frank in the first film) is brought in on a stretcher, sat on the mattress and given an open razor to play with by Channard. He slashes himself, bleeds all over the mattress, and Julia bursts out. Geoff said: "We built a rig that Debbie Joel (skinned Julia) could get underneath, covered in blood, with slime everywhere, and did lots of insert shots of her face coming out of the slime and of her pushing her hands through, with blood flying everywhere. Browning slithers across the floor, she rolls on top of him and sucks the life out of him. He has a blue face, covered in red blood, and we filled his mouth with yellow slime and got him to squirt it out in his final moments...we got all the primary colours there."

We asked Geoff what was used for all the gunge and slime. "Oh that was mattress filling!" he laughs. "It just so happens that mattress filling, soaked in stage blood, looks like piles of raw flesh. We kept buckets of it for future use."

Geoff anticipates possible censorship problems with this scene - "That was the nastiest one. Everyone was extremely offended. It'll be interesting to see what happens. Who knows? The censorship situation is changing all the time."

Were there any moments in the original HELLRAISER that caused problems with the censor? "Apart from the hammer murders" said Geoff "And Frank being ripped apart with hooks, which were trimmed, the biggest problem we had was with Prudo begging for mercy, it was just too much. That was none of our doing, it was just that his acting was so good."

While walking around Channard's house the flayed, scarlet Julia makes for a startling contrast with the stark, modern cream and black decor. "Our brief was to make her look sexy, so we gave her a very sleek, curvy look. Debbie already has beautiful bone structure, a nice smile, beautiful eyes. She was a joy to work with.

"The body suit is reasonably accurate, anatomically speaking. We didn't put all the fatty tissue on her breasts because it would have looked like two fried eggs on her chest. Strict accuracy is not the point, what matters is whether it looks good on screen or not." Later Channard binds Julia in bandages to protect her flesh. "We were desperately trying to get away from that cliched mummy look" said Geoff "Which isn't easy. The way we've done it, the foam head-piece blends on film into the bandages. Debbie looks great in bandages."

To get skin on Julia, Channard must supply her with victims, just as she supplied Frank in the first film. This time the make-up for the human remains has been improved - the dehydrated husks seem cancer-ridden, as though all the goodness has been sucked out of them, leaving only the body's wastes and poisons.

In the "blood boudoir", a mixture of models and actors in various make-ups hang in chains. One clever shot has the camera moving away from a chained nubile, panning slowly around the blood boudoir and returning to find her a ghastly shell. The chained nubile was played by Jackie St. Claire, Page 3 model and ex-girlfriend of Prince. To our considerable chagrin, all her nude scenes were shot before we visited the set.

The major make-up FX scenes had to be completed very early on in the shoot, because after three and a half weeks of "doing gooey stuff" Clare Higgins had to leave the production to meet a prior commitment to Granada TV. "We got three days off for Xmas and nothing for New Year" remembers Geoff.

How did the actors bear up under this heavy schedule, added to the more common-or-garden discomforts of having elaborate make-ups applied to them and getting up in the early hours of the morning to have them applied in time for their scenes? "They were superb" said Geoff. "Very patient. Because we started applying make-up at 4am Ken Cranham would simply fall asleep, which is O.K. As long as I'd already got the back done I could do the front while he was sleeping." The most arduous make-up job of the lot was the one required for "Skinned Julia".

"That originally took eight hours, eventually we got it down to six. The body suit took half an hour to get on. The hands were new each day and there was a seven-piece make-up on her head."

Does Geoff think that technological advances will make this process less onerous in the future? "Well" he said, "there's a lot of talk about computer animation taking over, but I hope not - you would lose the personality. You've got to remember that there are actors in there. When boredom really starts coming into it is when you've been on call, been sitting there for six, eight, ten hours, whatever, finally you're called on at 7pm, they take one shot and that's it. It happens on every picture, you can't go by pieces of paper. And of course it's toughest on the artists. On the first picture, the Cenobites were not allowed out (the one time Doug Bradley did go out in his Pinhead make-up he caused quite a commotion in Cricklewood High Street!)"

"Yesterday we chopped Chatterer's fingers off in a door- we were called at 9.30am and the shot was finally taken at three in the afternoon" sighs Geoff.

For the scene in which Channard sprouts tentacles from his hands, long shots of Kenneth Cranham wearing a prosthetic arm will be intercut with close-ups of his hand, a bladder on his palm indicating a bulge, and shots of a cable-operated arm on a rig for the emergence of the tentacles. At the tip of each tentacle is a tiny mouth, which sprouts a bunch of scalpels that keep blossoming until they become "the most lethal looking things you have ever seen in your life." The stop-motion cutting tools are intercut with live action ones on a drill for the scene in which they are pushed into one unfortunate character's face.

"This is not quite go-motion" says Geoff, showing us the rig "but we do get a nice smooth transition. DRAGONSLAYER was the first film to use this system. If you take a film like STAR WARS, they have everything connected to a big computer, you move it into place by hand without photographing it, record it in the computer, then you press a button and the rods move it into that position. They can also impart a blur by working out what the last position was and what the next position is - when they photograph it the result is a blurring effect. Budget restrictions prevent us from buying one of those million dollar computer rigs. Of course in some cases the animation is meant to look mechanical, for instance Ray Harryhausen's "Talos", the giant bronze statue in JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. On the giant Lament Configuration this style really works, it gives it weight. It's really complex and looks gorgeous. When you see the rushes and all this stuff comes together and works, that's very satisfying."

How satisfied is Geoff with his work on this film relative to what he did on HELLRAISER? "Oh very. This is the best work I've done. We've knocked some of the rough edges off. On HELLRAISER we were allowed to do things that had never been done before, to design characters that were heavily into hurting themselves. It was very much in our minds to go beyond what had ever been done in that price-range before. Even if you are limited by budget, there's no limit to imagination. I did mainly Pinhead on the first film and Channard on this one, of the two I suppose I'm fonder of Pinhead because he became very much the image of the film, he really caught on." Apparently there were even jokey suggestions of marketing Pinhead pin-cushions!

"I went to see HELLRAISER with various people" he continues "including my parents (they loved it) and there were people running out, people throwing up - that's a great compliment. But blood and guts can only be scary in certain situations, not as an end in itself, not when you're just killing people for the sake of it. That's why I'm not ashamed of the HELLRAISER films...they contain real characters, with real motivations."

"...AND WOULD SIR LIKE SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?" GEOFF MAKES UP DOUG BRADLEY AS PINHEAD (INSET)

REVIEW BY JEREMY CLARKE

Eagerly awaited by monster movie fans everywhere, THE MONSTER SQUAD starts off with a blood-red-on-black creeper (lettering going up the screen) proclaiming that exactly 100 years ago in Transylvania, the forces of good and evil came momentarily into balance. This provided Dr. Van Helsing with the opportunity to rid the world of evil forces once and for all. Unfortunately, as the next title informs us, he blew it.

There follows an awesome sequence, one of those rare occasions in the cinema when the onscreen activity is so riveting that one barely notices the start-of-film credits running throughout. Long, slow, atmospheric beneath-the-bowels-of-the-castle shots give way to rapid-fire close ups of, firstly bat claws and secondly human hands, which in turn are cut into lengthy takes of a majestic, unmistakeable Count Dracula (played in regally undead style by Duncan Regehr) followed by a frenetic - if confused - battle between the forces of Van Helsing on the one hand and the hordes of the Undead (including some impressive, white-robed vampire women) on the other. (This is not 'confused' in the usual damning sense, but in that rare sense wherein the momentum of the piece carries it along at breakneck speed without the incomprehensibility of the plot being a problem, as in Howard Hawks' THE BIG SLEEP). Indeed, had the rest of the film been up to this standard, one would have little hesitation about proclaiming it a masterpiece. Unfortunately it isn't, but has a lot going for it nevertheless.

The Monster Squad of the title are a group of pre-pubescent boys led by Sean (the precocious Andre Gower) who are so taken with the old Universal Pictures monsters that they have their own club dedicated to them. Writer/Director Fred Dekker's admirable intention was to resurrect these old monsters in a movie with similar logic to something like FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943); consequently, exactly a century after Van Helsing's failed attempt to banish their evil from the world, the monsters return to find the amulet essential for the ritual of banishment before some good guys do. This amulet just happens to be in the same American town as Sean's club. Cue lots of scenes of monsters turning up unexpectedly in interesting places.

Two pilots fly a cargo from Transylvania to America. Hearing noises in the back one of them goes to investigate. Among the coffin-sized boxes (including one Frankenstein Monster-sized one) is Count Dracula - with a few impressive surprises up his sleeve, not least the special effect that enables him to turn into a bat in one unbroken shot.

A mummy escapes from the Egyptology department of the local museum. A small boy who no one listens to finds mummy and daddy in the middle of the night to complain that there's a monster in his bedroom cupboard. Daddy goes into the room and manages to open the cupboard (where the mummy stands) to show his son there's nothing there - and also manages to do this without looking into the cupboard, ensuring that he doesn't actually see the monster.

In true Universal tradition, the Frankenstein Monster gets his scene with an innocent girl (actually Sean's sister Phoebe, excluded by her brother from his club on grounds of gender). "You'll have to let me join now", she says when she has shown the boys the friendly Monster.

Then a man turns up at the local police station violently pleading "Lock me up, I'm a werewolf", and is shot for his pains; his later transformation takes place in the back of a police van under a bloodstained sheet (since he is presumed a corpse) and demonstrates an impressive visual dexterity on the part of the film-makers. Panning from head to toe, light (from streetlights overhead?) illuminates first a wolfish hand and then an equally wolfish foot breaking out from under the sheet: the effect is nothing less than electric.

Given that the initial Transylvanian battle centres around a ritual which can be spoken in front of the amulet at the stroke of midnight every hundred years by a virgin, it is perhaps inevitable that Dekker's screenplay should try lots of ham jokes concerning the virginity or lack thereof of any of the local teenage girls which the film could well do without. Since Sean's little sister Phoebe is certain to be a virgin (I mean - incest in a Hollywood teen movie?!!), the sudden spark of inspiration on the heroes' part to use her at the eleventh hour to speak the invocation is too obvious for words, and suggests that the whole virgin subplot should have been ditched at the script stage.

Still, the script is not without its better moments, even if it is a bit weedy overall. For example the two cops (one being Sean's father) hurtling along the road towards the scene of some strange goings-on suddenly find Dracula's sleek, black car (with silver skull on the bonnet) heading straight towards them, with no time to take evasive action. Seconds later, the car passes through them! Or there's the moment when the boys, racing along the road in a truck, find the mummy clinging onto the back. One of them manages to attach a bit of loose mummy bandage onto a passing tree, and the bandages start to unwind, revealing nothing inside them! Finally, there's the army who turn up at the end of the film after all the action's over, like lost extras from some 50's Sci-Fi B-movie! There are also some very fine special effects and the various monsters - particularly the Wolfman, the Mummy, and the Gill-Man (from THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON) are a credit to all concerned.

Despite my reservations, THE MONSTER SQUAD is more good than bad, and a lot of genre fans will probably love it and think I'm nitpicking. I would simply respond that, good though the film is, it could have been a lot better.

CREDITS

Directed by Fred Dekker. Produced by Jonathan A. Zimbert. Written by Shane Black and Fred Dekker. Visual effects produced by Richard Edlund A.S.C. Monsters created by Stan Winston. Starring Andre Gower, Robby Kiger, Stephen Macht, Duncan Regehr, Tom Noonan, Brent Chalem, Ryan Lambert. Running Time 83 minutes. Cert 15. THE MONSTER SQUAD opens in Scotland on July 1, in London on July 15 and across the country from July 22.

DUNCAN REGEHR AS DRACULA

SAM'S GRAVEYARD GIVEAWAY

"It's giveaway time again in SAMHAIN with no fewer than four competitions offering a host of prizes including videos and T-Shirts. Each competition has been allocated its own plot in my graveyard and you'll find all the details on the respective gravestones. You can enter as many competitions as you want (if you don't want to cut the page up then photocopy the DREAM WARRIORS word square) and all entries should be sent to : GRAVEYARD GIVEAWAY, SAMHAIN, 19 ELM GROVE ROAD, TOPSHAM, EXETER, DEVON EX3 0EQ to arrive no later than the closing date of July 15. You can put all your entries in one envelope but you must mark the envelope with the names of ALL the competitions you have entered. And as if this lot isn't enough turn to page 28 and you'll find details of yet another competition with horror albums as prizes....."

Yes, you too can transform yourself into a half man/half robot with this great ROBOMASK. The mask is hand made by CREEPERS who specialise in such facial attire and to put yourself in with a chance of winning it just tell us the name of the director of ROBOCOP. Then mark your entry MASK and send it to the above address.

DEAD OF NIGHT

Medusa's DEAD OF NIGHT is a chilling tale of voodoo magic and possession and we've got three copies of the film on video to give away. All you have to do is tell us the name of the famous British studio that produced the classic 1945 film THE DEAD OF NIGHT. Mark your entry DEAD and send it to the competition address.

7 million years dormant...

The

PRINCE OF DARKNESS

is awakening.

Put your life into his hand...

...Welcome to your darkest hour!

John Carpenter's PRINCE OF DARKNESS is currently on release and to celebrate we've got loadsa prizes to give away. For starters the six main prize winners will receive a PRINCE OF DARKNESS soundtrack album, T-Shirt, badge and mini-poster. In addition six runners up will receive a T-Shirt and badge and there are loads more badges for other runners up. All you have to do is tell us which John Carpenter film was all about the KING of rock and roll and who took the leading role. Then send your entry to the above address marking it PRINCE.

WARNER HOME VIDEO

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 3

DREAM WARRIORS

W	E	S	C	R	A	V	E	N	O	V	U	W	N	E
E	A	L	A	R	A	I	F	F	L	I	K	S	A	R
U	R	E	H	S	R	D	R	O	R	R	T	S	L	A
P	C	E	H	R	L	T	E	E	R	T	S	M	L	E
S	A	P	Y	O	A	X	D	D	L	E	T	T	U	D
T	U	I	P	I	F	L	D	P	I	N	H	E	Q	Y
H	D	R	N	A	N	C	Y	T	H	O	M	P	S	O
O	Y	M	O	R	E	A	K	K	I	S	L	A	O	P
O	B	P	C	A	L	E	R	A	M	T	H	G	I	N
W	Y	N	I	W	R	T	U	U	N	A	K	O	S	S
Q	T	Y	L	Q	U	I	E	T	R	O	O	M	N	K
N	F	U	L	A	M	J	G	G	E	E	N	A	B	D
P	M	S	C	E	E	L	E	H	D	S	M	R	A	M
E	R	E	E	R	Q	B	R	R	I	Y	K	L	P	O
S	R	O	I	R	R	A	W	H	A	E	R	D	K	K

Hidden in the square are 10 words associated with the film-see if you can find them:

(1) FREDDY KRUEGER
(2) NIGHTMARE
(3) ELM STREET
(4) DREAM WARRIORS
(5) QUIET ROOM
(6) DR NANCY THOMPSON
(7) SLEEP
(8) SPRINGWOOD
(9) HYPNOCILL
(10) WES CRAVEN

Freddy Krueger is used to putting people to sleep (permanently) but win our DREAM WARRIORS competition and you can have him wake you up every morning as the prize is A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3 alarm clock. And that's not all, the lucky winner will also receive a copy of A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM WARRIORS on video. All you have to do is find the ten words hidden in the above word square and let us know which format video you would like (VHS or Beta) if you win. Then mark your entry NIGHTMARE and send it to the above address. Sweet dreams!

LES PAUL ROBLEY TALKS TO H.R.GIGER ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING MOVIE "THE MIRROR", "ALIENS", DAVID LYNCH AND MORE...

LPR: For THE MIRROR which paintings are they using specifically?

HRG: They are using some of my best paintings for the film. You see them through the mirror in three-dimensional form. The people from THE MIRROR saw it in my book NECRONOMICON and wanted to use it in their film. It was also the "right stuff" for Ridley Scott to bring to ALIEN (particularly, the mutants in NECRONOM IV). One of them, THE SPELL, I began in 1972 and finished in '76. I've done about three or four of these enviroments. They are always about this size: 420mm long and 240mm high. I make them in three pieces so I can get them out of the house. (He also uses a dumbwaiter system to move the artwork while he paints, a method borrowed from Salvador Dali).

LPR: Will you actually work on the set for THE MIRROR.

HRG: Now I have not much to do on the film. For me it's the best when someone takes my images and brings it to life in the film, and I don't have to invent another thing. That's very nice... I hope they use independent people for the effects and not a company, so I can become involved and control everything. Because it never ends up looking like my stuff. It always looks a little influenced by the man who is doing it. If he has spent his whole life modelling apes, the shapes look ape-like. The biggest problem is to find someone who can make my stuff look exactly like it is.

LPR: Who is doing it for the film?

HRG: I don't know. I heard there are some people who worked on ALIEN 2 or ALIENS. But I would prefer to bring along my man who modelled my home enviroment and furniture: the table, chairs. Des Fries is the best for me because he knows my work.

LPR: Will you work on THE MIRROR yourself and sculpt as you did on ALIEN?

HRG: No, I don't think so. Just oversee. But I like to be very much involved in the film because I never was satisfied with what they did with my work in the past. I was horrified about POLTERGEIST II. I couldn't find anything there... But that was probably my mistake not to be there. So, this time, if they want to transform my image they can't change a lot. But it's difficult to see how my paintings look from the side. So, probably, I have to give some advice and make some sketches of how they look dimensionally.

LPR: What did you think of the changes made to the designs of your creatures in ALIENS?

HRG: I thought the whole mechanisation was very well done. Though, I was a little depressed because nobody asked me to work on the film. I was in Los Angeles at the time working on POLTERGEIST II and I asked around about ALIEN 2. People told me they didn't know, that it was in England. For me it would be the most logical thing to work on that film. I also heard they didn't ask Ridley Scott about this movie.

LPR: You received compensation, though...

HRG: No! Nothing, They put my name in the credits as designer of old alien concept, but I never got any money.

LPR: And they're your monsters.

HRG: In the contract, Fox can make as many films as they want. It's always the company's rights and they do what they want.

LPR: Can we talk a little about the story of THE MIRROR? Do you know much about it?

HRG: No (laughter). I only saw a short five-minute promo of the film in Italy. It shows some of my works and what I did on ALIEN. It has a different mirror than my three-angled one. I was too late to show them so the crew made their own. It's an old mirror with a face on top and some hands and clouds around it. But, it's not my mirror. I don't like this mirror.

LPR: What does your mirror look like?

HRG: The mirror is like a box. It's closed by a door made up of two hands. It's composed of three angles, and when they pull the cover off, the evil comes out and you see the other world.

LPR: Are they using your concept?

HRG: I don't know. I told them to do it (laughs). We haven't seen each other, the man who makes this film.

LPR: Which artists have influenced you?

HRG: First, it's always Hieronymus Bosch. And Dali, Gaudi and Alfred Kubin (an illustrator of the early 20th century). He wrote THE OTHER SIDE and a movie was made from it called DRARMSTADT. I prefer art nouveau and those from the Vienna school.

LPR: What are your favourite films and directors?

HRG: You know the film BLUE VELVET? David Lynch is still one of my favourite directors. And Ridley Scott. I'm not so crazy about fantastic films. I prefer reality.

LPR: Were you disappointed you weren't asked to work on David Lynch's DUNE since you had previously done drawings for Alexandro Jodorowsky's version?

HRG: David Lynch himself made drawings. Friends of mine asked him if I could work on DUNE but he refused. He was not pleased because he thought we had stolen his ERASERHEAD baby creature for ALIEN. But it can't be true because Ridley Scott had never seen ERASERHEAD. I saw it, but I don't know. Maybe he was jealous. But I think it's unnecessary for him to make such statements because he's so good. I like all of his films so much. I am a great admirer of David Lynch and I would very much like to work for him.

LPR: Do you read any American science fiction, fantasy or horror?

HRG: No, just books that are translated into German.

LPR: Which particular authors have inspired you?

HRG: Lovecraft for one. My books I gave the titles NECRONOMICON I and II, and in almost all of Lovecraft's stories the Necronomicon (a legendary book of magic) is mentioned. Also, I like Gustav Meyrink who wrote DER GOLEM.

LPR: How often do you go outside your dreams and ideas and use outside subject matter for your paintings?.

HRG: It depends what you do. If you've drunk too much wine and take some sleeping pills, it could create a melange that brings you outside this room or makes you go through the walls. I don't know really how it works, but it often happens to me, things like that. I'm very curious how it works, but I never found out.

LPR: What about your use of Mordor from LORD OF THE RINGS?

HRG: I like this book very much, and I was looking for a title for my works. It was a nice name for my paintings so I adapted these words for them.

LPR: How do you describe yourself as an artist?

HRG: I'm an artist not very "in": Just on the fringe. Fantastic art is never in. It's always a little on the side. There are just a few people who like fantastic art. In Zurich I think I'm alone. Switzerland is not a very fantastic land. If someone talks about Switzerland, it's always just about banks and money and mountains. Not about art...

LPR: Harry Lime said it well in THE THIRD MAN: Their only claim to fame is chocolate and the cuckoo clock.

HRG: (laughs) Now if you go to the pyramids of Giza in Egypt and they hear you're from Switzerland, they call you "Kuckuherschling". It's a box used in the kitchen meaning Suisse-Deutsche.

LPR: That's funny, since cuckoo clocks originate from the Black Forest in Germany, not Switzerland, like everyone thinks. Does your mother know what you paint for a living? What does she think about the phalluses and dead babies?

HRG: She likes my work very much because she's my mother and therefore, must like what I do. (laughs) Sometimes she's a little bit ashamed of what I do. If there are other people around she sometimes has to defend my work, but normally she likes very much what I do.

LPR: You describe your work as "biomechanical" creations...

HRG: Uh-huh. Sometimes it looks a little bit like techniques from the last century. Similar to David Lynch. There are tubes, pipes and not very well-working machinery.

LPR: Do you have many admirers here in Europe or are they mostly from the States?

HRG: I have a lot here. The most I have in Japan. I have a fan club there.

LPR: Why Japan of all places?

HRG: Probably because the Japanese people like very much the heavy stuff and cruelty in my paintings. Maybe because of Godzilla...I don't know. I've found that young people - ten to twenty years - are very well informed about me. So, I'm very happy. All of my books have been translated into Japanese, too.

LPR: Have you done any research in the supernatural as a basis for your work?

HRG: Not really, but sometimes unexplained things have happened to me...

LPR: Do you believe in it?

HRG: In a way, yes.

LPR: Have you ever had a supernatural experience?

HRG: Yes. As I told you sometimes I could go out of my body and fly about 50 or 40cms over the ground from my bed to another place and my perspective was about that. I could see my feet in the foreground.

LPR: This happened many times?

HRG: No, not many times. About eight times.

LPR: You've said many of these images come from your dreams. Do you have very bad nightmares?

HRG: Often, yeah. Like everybody, I think terrible things.

LPR: My dreams are never this bad.

HRG: No? This one (referring to The Spell) is not bad. Do you feel bad here?

LPR: No, I don't feel bad here. I like this type of artwork. It's very interesting. To me, though, it is a very scary place. I mean it's not somewhere I'd like to spend my holidays.

HRG: Yeah, that's true.

LPR: How painful is it for you to part with one of your paintings when you have to sell one?

HRG: I don't sell the large paintings. I sold a whole environment to a collector and that was quite hard. These in this room I will never give away. I want to keep the whole thing together. When The Spell went to Japan to exhibit, I had another behind it that took its place.

LPR: Do you paint to music?

HRG: No. The only one I really like is Miles Davis. I like piano, organ and violin.

LPR: You've also painted album covers for pop artists. During the 70's you designed covers for Brain Salad Surgery by Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and KooKoo by Deborah Harry.

HRG: I did a lot of lips and people with no eyes for Emerson, Lake and Powell, but it never came out. I did about 11 lips.

LPR: Guns are present in much of your work. What has been your fascination with them?

HRG: Guns are like an air pistol or an air brush. You can do something from far away and not be directly in contact with your subject.

LPR: Do you shoot?

HRG: Sometimes. We have not much occasion here in the city.

LPR: What about your fascination with dead cigar-chomping babies and phallic symbols?

HRG: People have always said that I look like these babies a little bit.

LPR: A self-portrait?

HRG: Probably. I don't know why I did these. At the same time there was a problem with oil and gas in 1973. Do you remember?

LPR: Yes, the energy crisis.

HRG: So, you can see many burners in my paintings. That's the only thing I know and the other things must have some reason behind them. Also, the contraceptives now are very "in".

LPR: Especially with all the "STOP AIDS!" posters I've seen in Switzerland. You should do these posters...People might take notice what with your style of painting.

HRG: (laughs) Yes. Do you know this poster I did they made so much noise about in America?

(Giger shows the Dead Kennedys poster that was banned in the States. It is a veritable meat factory of penises and vaginas. More disgusting than erotic, the sexual imagery is very different from his other works.)

LPR: Since you've been painting, have you noticed any improvements in the way your art is received?

HRG: I think so, yes. I can see that because there are so many Americans who copy my work in the film business.

LPR: How do you feel about that, especially when you don't get compensated for it?

HRG: One way I'm happy that people recognize what I do, and another way I'm not very happy because nobody says that's my idea or my creation. If someone adapts my stuff directly, if they say I am influenced by Giger, it's okay. But, if they say nothing, then I am not very happy.

LPR: And the fact you get no money for it, does that make you angry?

HRG: There are a lot of American filmmakers who copy my work and they send me a letter and say it is nice to have you in my film (laughs). So, I can't say anything. It's nice to be there. You know, sometimes people have the same idea at the same time. Also, my stuff is not completely fresh. I have seen Gaudi. I have seen Kubin, Dali...

LPR: What are you working on now besides THE MIRROR? Any paintings or books?

HRG: I did goblins for a Japanese film. I made some drawings, two airbrush. I'm the only foreign person working on the film. My name H.R. they can't translate into Japanese.

LPR: At what age did you begin painting?

HRG: About 18. I made some surrealistic sketches or atomic cartoons of how we'd look after nuclear war. People with no arms and they made jokes about this.

LPR: Did they look anything like your paintings now?

HRG: I have a model for a new book that shows what I did in 1962 and '63.

LPR: How has your work changed over the years since you began painting?

HRG: It became, I don't know, more clear, perhaps. If you saw N.Y. CITY (produced in 1977), you'll see how the style has changed.

LPR: When will your new book come out?

HRG: I don't know. Probably in May of '88, the same time as my show in Berlin, I hope.

HOME MADE HORROR is the part of SAMHAIN where you the reader come under the spotlight. Especially with the availabity of home video, many horror fans are having a go at making their own movies and this is the part of the magazine where you can showcase your work. Simply send us details of your projects, no matter how big or small, along with pictures or artwork if you have them, and we'll feature as many as we can in HOME MADE HORROR. Send details to the editorial address on page three and if you want photos etc. back then please include an SAE.

This issue we turn the spotlight on Max Della Mora from Italy, whose short film DROP OUT has been shown in a number of film festivals in Italy after premiering at the Festival of Montecatini Terme.

The short (17 minute) film was made during Max's fifth and last year at a Cinema and TV school on a budget of about 16 million Italian Lire (about £6,000 at the time the film was made). Actual shooting took about a month with a further two months of editing.

CARLO LIA BEING MADE UP AND AS HE APPEARS IN "DROP OUT"

The story concerns Paolo (a Fonze-like character) and Luca who by contrast is exceedingly shy. In their school cellar they find a TV set that transmits images recorded in hell and while the two are watching the TV it starts to bleed. A hand comes out of the screen brandishing a knife and Paolo is transformed into a murderous monster. The film ends with Paolo transformed back into human form and Luca condemned to life in a "TV Zone" for eternity.

Max said: "The greatest expense was for the rental of the lights and other equipment. All the actors are non-professionals and worked on the movie for nothing. For the FX we spent about £40. The monster mask was made using latex and cotton (the poor guy suffered the pains of Hell) and for the pus oozing out of the TV we used a pudding. -

"Rotten pudding (which smelt like a dead cat) was also put in the monster's mouth to simulate vomit although the actor concerned was pretty close to doing the real thing. There's also a glimpse (almost subliminal) of a rotten hand coming out from the tube. Latex and cotton were used and the hand was actually mine. My hand is also in the scene where the evil spirits of the TV give a knife to the transformed guy. There my hand was made up with latex, toilet paper and ECOLINE colours. When I removed the make-up I lost all the hairs on my arm and my skin looked like a chameleon!"

Even on a small film like DROP OUT, censorship reared its ugly head and at the suggestion of his cinema professors Max was forced to drop a number of gorey scenes which were felt to be too strong for a school-made movie.

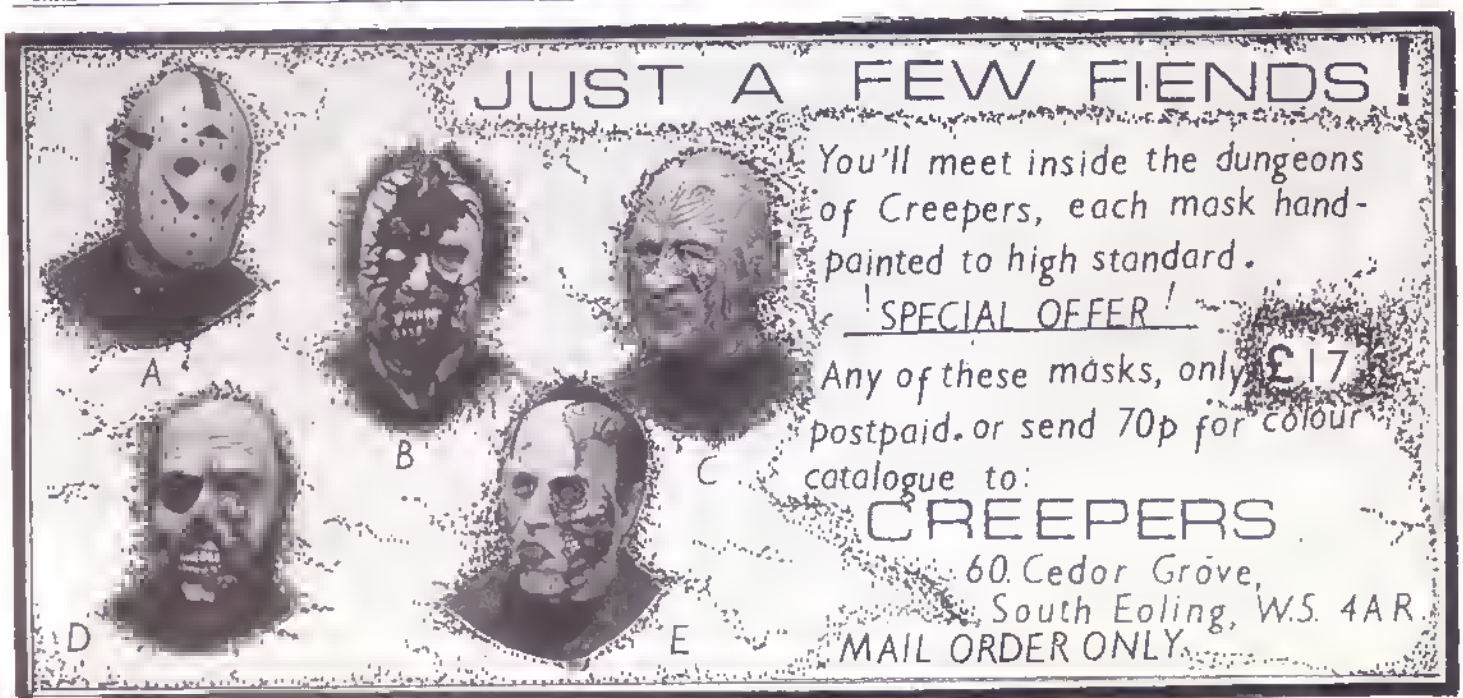
The film was shot at Max's film school and on some days shooting would last from 8am until 10pm. In addition to DROP OUT Max and his team shot a MAKING OF DROP OUT film on video at the same time!

Closer to home, Sussex is the setting for an independent horror film to be made by SAMHAIN reader Robert Hulse. Entitled NO LOVE AFTER DEATH the film is to be shot on 8mm and then transferred to video. Time and money permitting it will run for a full hour and a half and filming is due to take place in the next month or so.

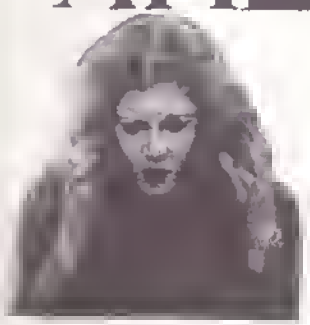
The story concerns three men who, after being ditched by their girlfriends (who were all sisters), make a revenge pact to ensure the girls don't go out with anyone else. They set about killing the girls, one by one. Eventually only one of the girls remains but she switches the tables by sending the spurned lovers to an early grave. Robert informs us that there is to be a liberal sprinkling of sleaze and there was mention of scenes involving a very nasty death by screwdriver and the splitting in half of one of the victims with an axe!

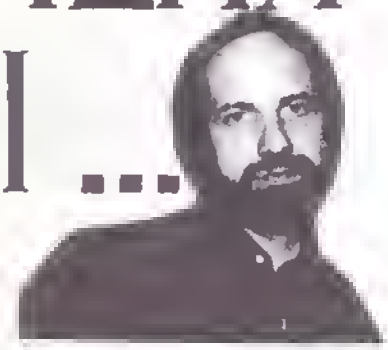
The crew are looking for somewhere where they can get hold of foam latex and if anyone can help with this they can contact Robert C/O SAMHAIN (address on page three).

Finally, SAMHAIN reader David Dwan is looking for actors, actresses and effects people to help out on a horror film he is working on called TALISMAN. The film is to be shot in the West Yorkshire area and if you are interested in mucking in David can be contacted at 1 MAPLE DRIVE, WETHERBY, W. YORKSHIRE LS22 4QZ.



DE PALMA AND I...





ANTHONY JACKSON INTERVIEWS NANCY ALLEN CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE...

AJ: What drew you to the role of Officer Lewis in ROBOCOP?

NA: I suppose it's pretty much the same thing that happens with any movie that I do: I read the script - which I thought terrific, very original. The character to me is very, very strong, she's a terrific woman, I like her, I like her a lot. I liked the fact that she was basically a woman doing a man's job, and there's no real mention made of that, she does it, she does it well...I like Lewis. I identify with her a lot, with that kind of independence.

AJ: One of the things that occurred to me thinking about your role in ROBOCOP was exactly that, the woman doing a man's job, quite a change from your earlier roles, particularly the women victim characters in the De Palma films.

NA: I think I got it wrong. I feel much stronger about how I portray myself as a woman. I don't want that way of life, and I think that's the situation with that woman, you know, we don't know what her history is, but I do, you know, I gave her my own background. I know where she's coming from to get where she is and it's not important for anybody else to know, what we have to know is that she's there, she does the job, and I think, you know, the whole idea of her being where she is.

AJ: What do you think of the role of women in horror films, having been in a few in your time?

NA: Victims! Boring. It got boring. I don't wanna see it, I don't wanna play it.

AJ: Did you think it boring at the time though?

NA: Yes, you know what I mean, it's like enough. There are good movies, there are bad movies, and I think that the genre was very popular for a while, there were a couple of brilliant films and then of course they knocked off 5000 of them that were cheaper and sleazier and more exploitative. Because where do you go with it, you gotta show more, you gotta do more and more to get a greater thrill, I've just seen a lot of that stuff.

AJ: I think I agree...

NA: I've enjoyed horror films. Maybe I'm getting a little grumpy...you know...middle-American...home-owner.

AJ: When I was thinking about your career it occurred to me that there was a very interesting parallel - which I'm going to make and then you can completely repudiate it - between Tippi Hedren and Alfred Hitchcock and yourself and Brian De Palma, which is that both she and yourself started off in commercials. The story is that she was seen in a television commercial by Hitchcock and he plucked her up into stardom.

NA: Well I suppose that is a loose description. I mean Brian didn't discover me from television commercials but I did go from television commercials to making movies.

AJ: Are you and Brian still fairly amicable? Do you see much of each other?

NA: We've been divorced since December 1984 and we don't see much of each other.

AJ: Was it the pressure of working with each other?

NA: I think that's part of it, as to the rest of it it's to do with...it's really too personal to go into here.

AJ: You played opposite Keith Gordon in two De Palma films, DRESSED TO KILL and HOME MOVIES.

NA: Yeah, we did HOME MOVIES first. he's a wonderful actor.

AJ: The incredible thing about him is that he always looks about 15...he looks that age in STATIC.

NA: I never saw that.

AJ: It was a very, very quirky little film. it was very much the little independent film. I've no idea how much distribution it had in the States. It had a little bit of independent distribution over here but I don't think it did terribly well.

NA: Oh, wait a minute, is that the one which Mark Romanek directed? Of course, I know, they did that together. Yeah, now I remember. I never saw that, I read the script when they were working on it - very peculiar film.

AJ: It's lovely.

NA: I wish I had seen it because I know Mark did a little ten minute short that he showed to us that I thought showed really remarkable talent and a really good eye, you know, a little icy but it was a really well directed piece.

AJ: So where does Mark Romanek come from?

NA: Well, I think...I wanna say Chicago but I'm not really sure. I think he was like a desperate, desperate De Palma fan, and wrote to Brian and asked if he could come and work on the movie, maybe he was from upstate New York, I don't even remember but I noticed that that was what happened. He wrote: "I'm not in Sarah Lawrence" which is where most of the students came from "But if I pay my way to New York can I work on the movie.

AJ: What did he do on HOME MOVIES?

NA: His name is probably on the credits somewhere. I know he helped around. He might have been one of Brian's assistants on the film but I know he was there. Sam Irvin, I don't know if you know Sam, well he's also one of the students...a lot of the students are doing pretty well, they go on and make shorts and now some of them are getting ready to make features, it's really exciting.

ROBOCOP

SOMETHING TO SCREAM ABOUT

EXETER, DEVON EX3 0EQ.

Dear John,

Just got a copy of SAMHAIN. Loved it. Great magazine - so much better than the American FANGORIA.

I have just co-written and directed a film which I think would be of great interest to your readers. It's called FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM in the U.K. and THE OFFSPRING in the U.S. It's coming out through Medusa in the U.K. and stars Vincent Price, Cameron Mitchell, Clu Gulager, Martine Beswick etc. The film was successfully released in the U.S. to many good reviews (and a few not-so-good ones as well) and has played several film festivals.

Please let me know if you've heard anything about the film - or if you've reviewed it in your magazine. I'm very anxious for any foreign impressions of the film and would love to hear from your readers about it.

I don't know if it's been censored for British release but I suspect so, due to the sexual nature of some of the film.

All the best
Jeff Burr,
West Hollywood,
California,
USA.

There you have it readers, your chance to have your opinions of the film read by the director himself. We previewed FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM last issue and if you've seen it and want to drop Jeff a line then send it to us here at SAMHAIN an we'll forward your letters on to him.

Dear John,

Better late than never, here are some comments on issue 8. I definitely approve of the new look. A colour cover is certainly more eye-catching. As for the back, well...I have to confess that I've never been much of an admirer of artwork (it's not my scene man!), but Pam's illustration really impressed me. I'm looking forward to the others in the series.

With improved packaging comes a greater responsibility to ensure that the contents (which are what really count, after all) don't drop in quality. Not much chance of this happening, if recent issues are anything to go by. The centre-page PREVIEW section is a good idea in theory, but in practice...it makes no difference to those people like me who are compelled to read every single word in the mag, reviews included. Reviews should not have any detrimental effect on the strong-willed among us. I have my own criteria by which to judge whether or not I go to see a film, based on its subject-matter, actors, director etc.... Reviews really have a minimal effect upon me.

Articles on Dario Argento and Joe D'Amato may be interesting, but a little on the esoteric side. You could be alienating many readers. How readily available are films by these guys? What chance do those of us living in such cultural backwaters as Northampton have of seeing their works? Is there any point in writing about pieces which 95% of the readership is never going to see?

I must admit I am biased, anyhow, in favour of past gems. Articles on Roger Corman, William Castle (who I feel has always been under-rated - forget the gimmicks, some of his films stand up really well today - curiosity pieces certainly), Michael Reeves, and various Hammer film directors. Am I being too retrogressive?

Complaints Department: regarding the letters page, did you really have to devote so much space to Shaun Hutson? Whatever private feud (petty squabble, more like) is going on between him and Ramsey, I'd rather not hear about it. Let them sort it out between themselves, please. If Ramsey has sent a reply to Shaun's letter, and you squander half your letters' page on it I really will have something to scream about!

Finally I must congratulate you on your "SAM HAIN IS IMMORTAL!" legend proudly emblazoned on the envelope. I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciated this ploy It wasn't coincidental was it? It was in deliberate opposition to the Post Office's irritating habit of stamping "JESUS IS ALIVE!" on everything. All I can say is that I know which of the two I have more faith in.

Keep up the good work
John Worley,
Moulton,
Northampton.

Yes it was deliberate and by the Post Office's own standards, if we can raise £50,000 then there should be nothing to stop us having it printed on everything in the run-up to October 31 (Halloween/Samhain). Donations to the editorial address please! And what's all this about Dario Argento being esoteric? Interestingly enough our features on Argen, to, D'Amato and Jesus Franco have been among the most popular we've ever run but having said that the most requested director is Terence Fisher hence this issue's feature on him. Clearly the best way is to cover all directors and that is ultimately what we'll be aiming to do.

HAMMER - BY DAVID CHAPPELL

Dear John,

As the scriptwriter of HELLBOUND, the HELLRAISER sequel, I was delighted to see the extensive coverage you gave our movie in SAMHAIN 8. I was a little less than delighted, however, to read among the coverage the following sentence: "Barker and Randel took a weekend to rewrite the script".

Now Film, as I'm sure you know, is a collaborative art; ideas flow freely from many creative people - producers, writers, directors, designers, FX people, editors, actors, and others - but I would like to state this clearly; nobody rewrote my screenplay but me.

There were several occasions - as there are with every film - where the script needed to be revised. Sometimes this would be due to budgetary considerations, as in the instance your article cited, sometimes due to the casting of certain actors, or for various other reasons. On each occasion that such revisions were required I was the person who made them. Both Clive and Tony would be the first to agree with this - just as I would be the first to agree that their creative input into this process was both significant and welcome.

Having suffered himself as the "mere" screenwriter on UNDERWORLD, Clive was careful to ensure that my contribution to the movie was a continuing one and that any script problems were routed through me, rather than the studio cat or the make-up girl's auntie, and Tony, in fact, was almost absurdly polite; on one memorable occasion calling me on the phone to check if it was okay to have Ashley/Kirsty say "Oh,

shit" instead of "Oh, God".

I'm sure the inaccuracy in your article was mistakenness rather than malice but I wished to set the record straight. Thank you for the opportunity to do so.

Yours Sincerely,
Peter Atkins
Wavertree,
Liverpool.

P.S. One further point; Your editorial vaguely implies a kind of cultural imperialism on Tony's part. Nothing could be further from the truth. His respect for HELLRAISER is immense and his work on the sequel has been superb.

Ooops! Sorry about the inaccuracy Peter, we were misinformed.

Dear John,

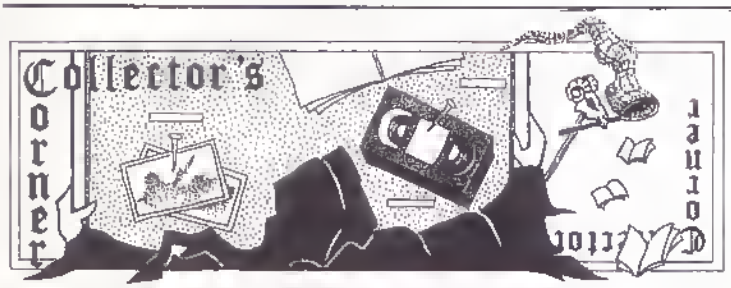
Thank you for the first eight issues of SAMHAIN, the best British horror mag available. The colour cover is boss, though I was sad to see you have changed the SAMHAIN logo.

The content of the mag is brilliant, pieces like "Britannia Rules the Graves", "Magic All Around Us", Giacomo Martino's look at cannibal films, and the pieces on individual directors make for highly informative and interesting reading.

Of all the pieces that have appeared in SAMHAIN I must mention Brigid Cherry's "Screaming For Release", which, for me, was the most outstanding article yet.

Best of luck with the continuing saga of SAMHAIN.
Steve Jones,
Wirral,
Merseyside.

I must admit I wasn't too sure about the new logo myself Steve but it's grown on me and I think it's far more suitable for the new-look covers than the old one, legendary though it was!



This is the part of the magazine where you can buy and/or sell horror film-related merchandise and it will only cost you the price of a stamp to put an ad in as it's a completely FREE service. Generous to a fault, that's us.

Simply write down what you either want or are selling (and please make it clear which section you want your ad in) in a maximum of 30 words, then add your name, address and/or telephone number (depending on which you want in the ad) and send it to: COLLECTOR'S CORNER, SAMHAIN, 19 ELM GROVE ROAD, TOPSHAM, EXETER, DEVON EX3 0EQ. Ads for issue 10 should reach us by June 25 and please note, for obvious reasons we cannot accept ads for "Video Nasties".

WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED

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MAX C/O SAMHAIN EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

PRISON

The year is 1956 and the place is Creedmore Prison, the last of the primitive western territory pens; a huge, stone monster crouched low against the Tetons. Tonight, inmate Charlie Forsythe (Kane Hodder) swallows 60,000 volts of electricity for a murder he didn't commit, while Ethan Sharpe (Lane Smith), Creedmore's most brutal guard, stands silently by.

Sharpe knows Forsythe is innocent, but refuses to speak. The truth about Charlie Forsythe dies in a blast of electric heat and is buried when the doors of Creedmore Prison are sealed shut forever.

Until - today!

Overcrowding forces the prison board to reopen Creedmore's iron gates and install Ethan Sharpe as the new warden But Sharpe and the inmates soon learn that Creedmore Prison has not been standing empty all these years.

Charlie Forsythe's violent spectre has been trapped, lying in wait for the day when Ethan Sharpe would set foot in Creedmore again...and Forsythe could take his revenge.

Only inmate Connie Burke (Viggo Mortensen) and penologist Katherine Walker (Chelsea Field) have the courage to try to unearth Warden Sharpe's terrible secret. But time is running out. Charlie Forsythe's supernatural vengeance is rising in violent fury, and the prisoners of Creedmore will be slaughtered unless Warden Sharpe is brought to justice for a thirty-year wrong.

They must sacrifice Warden Sharpe, and perhaps even themselves, in order to save the prisoners of Creedmore. Burke leads a daring kidnap raid that brings Charlie Forsythe and Ethan Sharpe face-to-rotting-face at last.

Forsythe's supernatural rage versus Sharpe's blood thirsty instinct for survival, and the lives of the inmates of Creedmore in the balance, the two enemies fight it out in the haunted prison...

Lane Smith (Ethan Sharpe) brings vast experience in virtually every area of the dramatic arts to his role as the haunted prison warden. For Smith, the role was an interesting step in his distinguished career. His last film, appearing with Nick Nolte in the De Laurentiis Entertainment Group's WEEDS, cast him as a prison inmate and in PRISON he has graduated to warden!

Viggo Mortensen (Burke) became an actor through the yellow pages. Hanging out in New York, undetermined about what he was going to do with his life, Viggo saw an ad in the yellow pages that started him studying acting and shortly won his first part in a small play entitled "Two by Two", which led to additional acting work.

Today, after several other appearances and starring roles in two films, however, he is still undecided about his life. "After this movie wraps" he said "I'm thinking about going into goat herding, like my mother and her mother before her."

DIRECTOR: RENNY HARLIN, PRODUCER: IRWIN YABLANS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: CHARLES BAND, WRITER: C. COURTNEY JOYNER
STARRING: LANE SMITH, VIGGO MORTENSEN, CHELSEA FIELD.
PRISON RELEASED JUNE 17 CERT 18 RUNNING TIME 103 MINS

THE CARRIER

From the makers of CUT AND RUN, LIGHTBLAST and RETRIBUTION, comes a new film about a mysterious and deadly plague which hits a secluded American small-town, causing its victims to dissolve horribly on contact with an infected person or object.

In the isolated town of Sleepy Rock, a young man - Jake Spear (Gregory Fortescue) is accused of killing his parents and burning down the house to acquire the land. Jake denies this explaining that the local youths had deliberately got him drunk on that night.

After getting into a fight at a local dance, Jake goes home alone. While resting on his bed he is attacked by a creature which leaps out of the shadows. It is the "Dark Thing" which some of the locals had claimed to have seen recently. Jake fights it off, forces it outside and shoots it. There is a terrible storm raging which brings down the phone lines and destroys the bridge - cutting the town off. In the morning Jake searches for the creature's body, but it has disappeared.

Jake was scratched during the attack by the strange beast, and he soon begins to feel peculiar. He goes to see Old Man Patrick who shows him one of his books. However, when the old man takes the book from him, his fingers start to melt. He runs outside - screaming for help - his whole hand now dissolving. Someone takes an axe and cuts off the old man's arm.

Dr. King tests the book with a young chick which - to his surprise - rapidly disintegrates, leaving not a feather behind. At the church the doctor warns the townspeople about the serious threat of this "contamination". He explains it is probably being spread by a carrier - a human or animal which passes on a disease without actually developing the symptons itself. The congregation are angry and confused, but the Reverend (N. Paul Silverman) is sceptical about the doctor's theories. He declares that faith in God is all that is needed to defeat the plague; the people are fully supportive of the preacher. Most of the inhabitants despise the doctor, but they follow his instructions and wear makeshift protective clothing (plastic gloves etc.) to prevent the spread of infection - particularly after the first few victims are claimed.

Slowly, Jake realizes that he is the carrier. He always felt like an outcast, and this is now cruelly emphasized. Suspicion is rife throughout the town. Rivalry erupts and the community splits into two groups: The Barmen and the Jones Clan. The latter barricade themselves inside a house, hoarding weapons and animals such as cats (used to "test" for contaminated areas). The situation becomes increasingly tense, with hysteria and violence eventually taking over. In the middle of this is poor Jake, the man whose touch means instant death. Is this the end of Sleepy Rock? And furthermore, will it spread beyond?

WRITER/DIRECTOR: NATHAN J.WHITE, PRODUCER: JEFFREY DOUGHERTY, STARRING: STEVIE LEE, GREGORY FORTESCUE, STEVE DIXON.
THE CARRIER RELEASED BY MEDUSA VIDEO JUNE 23 89 MINS

CONTINUING OUR LOOK AT THE NOTORIOUS "VIDEO NASTIES"

FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN aka ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN aka IL MOSTRO E IN TAVOLA...BARONE FRANKENSTEIN
1973 Vipco 95 minutes

Noted pop artist and soclalite Andy Warhol began his underground film-making career with such non-crowd pleasers as SLEEP (1963 - a modest six hours of a man sleeping, filmed from a fixed position, the most interesting moments of which are when he turns over) and EMPIRE (1965 - eight hours of the Empire State Building with lights being turned on and off every so often). Only a special kind of aesthete could sit through the llkes of these to test out Warhol's theories about the limits of attention. Warhol even managed to make KISS, BLOWJOB and FUCK (all 1964) milestones of tedium, and presented hls menagerie of boring hangers-on as "alternative superstars" in yawn-fests such as CHELSEA GIRLS (1966), TRASH (1970), BAD (1971) and HEAT (1973).

When one of these "alternative superstars" shot and incapacitated Warhol, he handed his film set-up over to Paul Morrissey, who expanded the concept of "The Cinema of Endurance" by alternating the usual boredom with grisly splatter FX in FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN (a title designed to cash in on the first film Morrissey directed for Warhol, 1968's FLESH) and BLOOD FOR DRACULA aka ANDY WARHOL'S DRACULA, shot back-to-back in Rome and produced by Carlo Ponti.

As if to poke fun at those who detect proto-fasclst elements in Mary Shelley's story, Morrlssey relocates the action from its traditional German setting in Serbia. Baron Frankenstein, in the maniacal shape of Udo Kier, is building a perfect male from human remains, in the hope that it will mate wlth the ideal female which (in the best Blue Peter tradition) he prepared earlier, to produce a Serbian master-race. The Baron grows lmpatient for the big event while waiting for the perfect male head to turn up and vents his frustration by ripping open the scars of his Venus so he can run his hands (and also apparently hls penis) around in her guts.

With the aid of his goonish assistant Otto (who is similarly obsessed with disembowellment), the Baron ambushes two shepherds on their way home from the local bordello and makes off with the head of one of them. The survivor (Joe Dallesandro) is employed at Castle Frankenstein by the Baron's sexually voracious wife - who also happens to be his slster (Monique Van Vooren). Understandably alarmed at seeing his friend's head on the monster's body, Dallesandro starts prying into the Baron's experiments. He is discovered and suspended from a chain above the lab, at which point the monster rebels, klls everyone except Dallesandro, and commits suicide. The film ends with the Baron's children advancing on Dallesandro, scalpels at the ready.

It is temptlng to dismiss FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN as the amateurish, self-indulgent, tongue-in-cheek romp that it sets itself up as. Morrissey has expressed an admiration for CARRY ON films, and the teaming of Udo Kier and Arno Juerging (as Otto) - continued in BLOOD FOR DRACULA - is reminiscent of Pete 'n' Dud only a lot funnier (Morrissey actually directed Cook and Moore in an allegedly comlc version of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES some years later). Moreover, anyone who could leave so crude an actor as Joe Dallesandro to improvise his own dialogue must have a keen sense of humour. Desplte the fact however, that in a Warhol film what you see is usually what you get, there is more than meets the eye to both FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN and BLOOD FOR DRACULA. Both films cock a snook at the aesthetic ellte, the "beautiful people" who were Warhol's patrons. The aristocracy in FFF are so jealous of their self-proclaimed superiority that they resort to incest to maintain it. The Baron's excesses on the operating table can be read as a parody of the craze for plastic surgery among America's smart set.

FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN pours scorn on such vanity with constant reminders that physical beauty is a highly perishable commodity. No wonder these films had to be made in Italy. BLOOD FOR DRACULA peddles a simplistic brand of Marxism, making a meal of the obvious parallels that can be drawn between vampirism and capitalism.

This only serves to lend credence to claims that the films were actually directed by Antonio Margheriti rather than the bellicose right-winger Morrissey. Margherlti took part in the explosion of graphlcally gory horror films in Italy during the late seventies and early eighties, so he would have been quite at home with the dangling intestines in FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN, rendered by Carlo Rambaldi and showcased by the 3-D process the film was shot in, as was Enrico Job's impressive laboratory set. Unfortunately on the rare occasious that FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN is screened nowadays, it is almost invariably shown flat.

As a bizarre postscript to all this, Kier's oft-misquoted line "To Know Death, Otto, you have to fuck life in the gall-bladder" was glven an ironlc slant last year by Warhol's death from complications arising after a routine gall-bladder operation.
J.M.

MURDER-ROCK: DANCING DEATH (MURDEROCK UCCIDE A PASSO DI DANZA
1983 96 minutes

After the peak of personal creativity represented by the period 1979-82, Lucio Fulci's career entered a confused phase, characterized by frantic hopping from genre to genre and the announcement of films that were never made, or mutated into new projects. Disagreements with producers and bouts of ill health compounded his problems. British fans found it difficult to keep track of Fulci's output because most of his films from this period were not released over here, British distributors belng wary of the censorship hassles that had dogged his zombie films, not to mention the NEW YORK RIPPER debacle.

In 1983 Fulci wrote and began directing MURDER-ROCK, a giallo set in a dance school, with an eye to cashlng in on the current FAME/FLASHDANCE craze. After shootlng certain scenes (including his customary cameo appearance) he fell out with the film's batallion of producers (c.f. Tobe Hooper's difficulties on DEATH TRAP), aud walked off the set. When they went looking for him they found him making THE DEVIL'S HONEY, a soft-porn film which reportedly incorporates footage from an abortive sequel to THE BEYOND (Confused? Well this is the wacky world of Italian exploitation we're talking about here), and the balance of MURDER-ROCK was completed by an uncredited director.

The film is set in "The Arts for Living Centre", a dead-ringer for FAME's "School for Performing Arts", right down to having a black dance instructor who informs the students that if they want success, it costs, and right here is where they pay in sweat. They've got plenty to sweat about too, because some loony is stalking dancers and puncturing their hearts with an ornamental hat-pin (curiously accompanied by out-breaks of strobe lighting and a horror horn).

In contrast with the gouts of gore that poured out of the estate agent in HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY, the killings are rendered in disappointingly restrained style (though it has to be said that they are more convincing than some of Gianetto de Rossi's flamboyant splatter effects). Fulci's absence also probably accounts for the fact that although much use is made of extreme close-ups of Olga Karlatos's beautiful eyes, they are at no point gouged out a la ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS.

She it is who is charged with unmasking the killer, but as the culprit's identity is transparently obvious from the word go, attempts are made to distract the viewer with dance sequences that are as ill-assorted as they are intrusive - break-dancing kids hip-hop all over the tltle sequence but are mysterlously never seen again, one of Jennifer Beals's routines is clumsily llfted from FLASHDANCE and elsewhere a chorus line shake a leg in a manner that wouldn't be out of place in "Seaside Summer Special". The best that could be said for thls stuff is that it might possibly have been an influence on ex-Fulci associate Michele Soavi's STAGEFRIGHT (1987).

To maintain our interest several red herrings are dragged in, the way they are employed suggestlng THE NEW YORK RIPPER, as does a dream sequence in which Karlatos ls attacked by one of the suspects. Perhaps if Fulci had stayed with the production we would have been left with a film of that quality, as it stands MURDER-ROCK is a pretty modest affair. There's a certain amount of fun to be derived from trying to work out which scenes were shot by Fulci and from spotting familiar faces - Ray Lovelock from THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE, Christian Borromeo from THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK and TENEBRAE, the girl who played Dr. Freudstein's daughter in HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY, and the 'ol doc himself, Giovanni de Nava. The score is by Keith Emerson and it's terrific and the film was a prize winner at the 1986 Avoriaz Fear festlval.
J.M.

PRINCE OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

THE FILMS OF TERENCE FISHER - PART ONE - 1904-1958
BY KEVIN LYONS

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN

Think of Hammer films and invariably, the first names to spring to mind are those of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. But think again and chances are, you'll come up with director Terence Fisher, the man who guided the British company through its finest years and who, almost single handedly created their distinctive Gothic style that would come to dominate genre cinema for more than a decade.

Fisher was born in 1904, in the Maida Vale district of London. Film making was not his first chosen career and, compared to many of his contemporaries, he came to the industry at a late age. His first career was at sea. Persuaded by his mother (Fisher's father had died in 1908), he joined the Royal Navy's training ship HMS Conway and, at the age of 17, went to sea with P&O: "It was a wonderful life for five or six years," recalled Fisher, "but I never looked on it as an occupation for a lifetime."

After coming ashore, he spent some time as an assistant display manager at the London department store Peter Jones before deciding that what he really wanted to do was work in the movies. At first, Fisher wanted to be a film editor and it was to this end that, at the age of 28, he applied to - and was accepted by - Shepherd's Bush Studios, initially to work as what he describes as: "...the oldest clapper-boy in the business." His promotion to the editing department came a year later and he quickly proved himself to be a capable and efficient editor. Within nine months, Fisher had graduated to solo editing and soon transferred to Teddington Studios which were, at the time, still owned by Warners.

It wasn't until 1947, when he was 43 years old, that Fisher took his first step towards being a director when, at the invitation of Rank, he enrolled at their director's school based at Highbury Studios. There, he helmed a number of shorts before producer Sydney Box took him off to Pinewood to make his first feature for Rank. But this was not a good time for the British film industry (when has there ever been a good time for the British film industry?) and Rank were, in Fisher's own words: "...very wary about their investments in films and the whole industry in Britain began to go through a very bad time - apart from Hammer, who were applying themselves very seriously to improving their product. And so I joined Hammer."

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Hammer, as we know it, was founded in 1948 by Michael Carreras and Anthony Hinds as the production branch of Exclusive Films who had established something of a reputation for producing solid, well made dramas primarily for domestic consumption. Fisher joined the company at an opportune time just as Hammer were entering into a co-production deal with American producer Robert L. Lippert. The first film produced under the deal was THE LAST PAGE (aka: MAN BAIT) (1952), a tale of love and blackmail that provided Fisher with his first vehicle for the company that was to bring him to fame.

The same year, he made his first genre film for Hammer, a little seen thriller called STOLEN FACE (1952). Paul Henreid stars as Dr. Philip Ritter, a gifted plastic surgeon whose unrequited love for Alice (Lizabeth Scott) leads to tragic consequences. As Alice is betrothed to Ritter's friend (Andre Morell), our hero rebuilds the face of a scarred patient (Mary Mackenzie) so that she resembles his true love. The plot takes a twist for the worse when the second Alice (also played by Scott) turns out to be a psychopath and the climax sees this doppelganger biting the dust, leaving the real Alice (are you still following this?) - who hadn't married the friend after all - to marry Ritter!

This confusing and thoroughly routine thriller saw Fisher still flexing his directorial muscles and struggling with an inferior script. It seems to have been almost forgotten now, overshadowed by the successes Fisher was to enjoy later in his career, but it is important to note the theme of a doctor messing around with the laws of nature, one that Fisher was to return to twice in the following years.

The first occasion was for one of a pair of science fiction films he made for Hammer in 1953. Based on a novel by William F. Temple, FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE was a more assured production than STOLEN FACE, Fisher working from a better script, one he co-wrote with Paul Tabori. Like his previous

fantasy offering, the film centres around wayward science, with a young physicist (Stephen Murray) inventing a machine that can duplicate anything - even living matter. But again, love rears its head in the shape of Barbara Payton, who falls in love with Murray's partner, John Van Eyssen. A heartbroken Murray duplicates his lost love but, alas, she loves Van Eyssen too!

At the heart of FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE is an interesting and well conceived idea, one that Fisher transfers to the screen with some style, hampered only by a minuscule budget. The ironic twist of the simulacra falling for Van Eyssen is particularly refreshing and the film is directed with more confidence than STOLEN FACE.

SPACEWAYS, Fisher's second SF film for Hammer, was released at around the same time as FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE but failed to match the quality of its companion piece. Based on a radio play by Charles Eric Maine, it tells the story of aerospace engineer Stephen Mitchell (Howard Duff) whose wife Vanessa (Cecile Chevreau) and her lover Crenshaw (Andrew Osborn) mysteriously disappear. Mitchell is number one suspect, accused of killing them and launching their bodies into orbit aboard a new satellite. Mitchell and his lover, Lisa (Eva Bartok) head off to explore the satellite but - in a thoroughly lame 'twist' ending - it turns out that the missing wife and lover (who's also a Russian spy!) have been hiding down on terra firma all the time.

Unfortunately, it's not as involving as it sounds, its numerous twists and turns proving confusing and pointless. Fisher again does sterling work with a sub standard script, the problem with which is that it can't shake its origins as a radio play, relying on too much talk and not enough action.

But all of this was just a form of apprenticeship for Fisher who, by the late 1950's, had made over 20 films, many of them for Hammer. In 1957, Fisher found himself owed a film by the company under the terms of his contract. As luck would have it, the next film on their books was to be a new version of Mary Shelley's novel, FRANKENSTEIN. Under Fisher's direction, the resulting adaptation, THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957) changed the face of the contemporary horror film and made Hammer into a viable international film making force.

Forsaking the stilted, stage-bound mannerisms of Universal's 1931 version, Fisher's remake was a flamboyant masterpiece, full of life, vigour and - perhaps most importantly - colour. It begins with Baron Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) being visited in his prison cell by a priest. Consumed by guilt, the Baron tells his visitor a macabre tale of a man obsessed, and the bloody tragedy that stemmed from that obsession. With the help of his tutor and long-time friend, Paul Krempe (Robert Urquhart - who doesn't seem to age at all during the film, despite a time span of at least two decades!), the Baron discovers a process whereby he can restore life to the dead. Dissatisfied by his success at re-animating a dog, Frankenstein determines to put his process to the ultimate test by constructing a new body and giving it life. Aided by a reluctant Paul, Frankenstein begs, steals and borrows the necessary limbs and organs to construct the cadaver.

The arrival of Frankenstein's cousin and fiancee, Elizabeth (Hazel Court) convinces Paul to abandon the experiment, leaving the Baron to carry on alone. As his obsession begins to overwhelm his sanity, he turns to murder, killing the renowned Professor Bernstein in order to use his brain. But an angry encounter with Paul results in irreversible damage being inflicted upon the brain. Undeterred, Frankenstein finishes his work. The resulting monstrosity (Christopher Lee) goes on the rampage and attacks its creator before escaping into the woods. Hunted down by Paul and the Baron, the creature is - temporarily - stopped by a bullet in the head.

But, having given his creation life once, the Baron has no qualms about doing it again: "Life has passed from its body. But don't forget I was the one who put it there in the first place." Threatened with blackmail from a maid (Valerie Gaunt) with whom he's been having an affair, Frankenstein uses the newly re-animated creature to murder her. But again he loses control of his creation and it escapes, almost killing Elizabeth before Frankenstein finally sets fire to it and watches it fall into a vat of acid.

Returning to the 'present', the film ends with Frankenstein - his story disbelieved and his sanity questioned by his former friend Paul - being led to his death at the guillotine for his murder of the maid.

Even now, three years after its release, THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN remains a truly remarkable film. There had been nothing quite like it before. It created a look and style that is still emulated to this day, forcing the British genre industry - which had been pretty poor until then - to create its own identity. The script, by Jimmy Sangster, was remarkably literate and complex for a genre film of that time; refusing to bow to genre conventions of clear cut divisions between 'good' and 'evil', Sangster casts Frankenstein as an ambignous character. He is not an intrinsically evil man - arrogant, perhaps, and impulsive, but his motives, no matter how misguided, seem sincere enough. He genuinely believes in what he is doing - this is not the madman of popular myth. For him, the challenging of God and nature is not a sin, but a triumph of Man's intellect. His devotion to his researches is complete, possessing an almost child-like enthusiasm and a surprising naivety: "What am I doing? I'm harming no-one."

But the film's success lies not so much in its excellent script, which gave it an undoubted edge over what little competition there was at the time, but in Fisher's stunning translation of that script into film. The gothic opulence of Ted Marshall's sets is used to stunning effect by Fisher, who uses every opportunity to revel in the warmth of his glowing Technicolor stock. His cameras prowl menacingly through the action, the sets are bathed in glowing light and the period costumes are colourful and authentic. The Aurum Horror Film Encyclopedia astutely identifies the film's "sensuality" and "...an operatic dimension." It's easy to see how much Fisher's early horror work for Hammer influenced the much vaunted Italian Gothic Cinema.

The acting has an equally 'classical' feel to it. Peter Cushing is quite magnificent as the obsessed Frankenstein, playing the role with a much needed humorous streak. Christopher Lee also made a considerable impact, despite having been buried beneath layers of make-up. Fisher's use and choreography of Lee and Cushing resulted in an electrifying screen partnership that was to last for many years. Perhaps Fisher's finest moment is in the unveiling of the creature. As his camera rushes vertiginously forwards to bring the creature's head into close up, Lee tears off his bandages, revealing Phil Leakey's incredible make up.

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was the first of Fisher's many forays into the hypocrisy of repressed Victorian sexuality. Cushing's Baron is a cold, clinical man, quite incapable of conducting any 'normal' form of relationship. His liaison with the doomed maid seems born more of biological necessity (the need for sexual release) than love; indeed, when he has

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succeeded in his aims ('reproduction' without sex, without the need for women), he callously murders her. Elizabeth is tolerated as a relative and perhaps because of a warped sense of duty, Frankenstein feeling bound to honour his childhood betrothal to his cousin. In their review of the film, Aurum said: "...in his (Fisher's) Frankenstein films, sexual deviance was a by-product of excessive rationality." It is the Baron's obsessive desire to complete his experiment, to create his own 'child' that leads to the suppression of his sexual desires. That the resulting creature is a psychotic monstrosity is of little concern to Frankenstein; it is his 'child' and he has triumphed, over nature and over God. The creature is an extension of his own subconscious - his alter ego, perhaps - and he has a genuine and touching love for it. This is the dangerous, aggressive release of Frankenstein's pent up sexuality that seeks to relate to others through pain and sorrow.

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was a massive international success and established Hammer as the foremost producers of class horror product. The critics, though, were outraged, unable to cope with both the gore and the open sexuality of the film. "Depressing, degrading," spat the Tribune, while the critic on The Observer was moved to say of it: "Without any hesitation, I should rank THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN among the half dozen most repulsive films I have encountered in the course of some 10,000 miles of film reviewing." Audiences, however, loved it and Hammer found themselves in search of a suitable follow up. Having drawn inspiration from one nineteenth century novel, they turned to another in the hope of repeating their success: Bram Stoker's DRACULA.

Hammer realised that much of the success of THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was due to its look, its innovative visual style as well as the carefully plotted script. So, they reassembled the same winning team (Fisher, Sangster, Lee, Cushing) to produce their new film. DRACULA (1958 aka: HORROR OF DRACULA) begins with Jonathan Harker's (John Van Eyssen) arrival at the imposing Castle Dracula to take up employment as librarian. A note from Dracula apologises for the Count's absence, but Harker is far from alone. A mysterious, and very frightened, young woman (Valerie Gaunt) appears as if out of nowhere, begging Harker to take her away from the castle. The encounter is interrupted by the arrival of Dracula who descends a flight of stairs to welcome Harker to his castle.

The Count shows his guest to his room, explaining that he will be away during the following day. He admires a photo of Harker's fiancee, Lucy Holmwood (Carol Marsh) before leaving, locking Harker in his room. While writing his diary for the day, we learn that Harker's real mission to Castle Dracula is to destroy the Count. Some time later, Harker finds that his door is now unlocked and sets out to explore the castle. His wanderings lead him to the young woman he met earlier who, while being comforted by Harker, rounds on him, biting his neck. Dracula, his eyes shot with blood and with blood on his lips, suddenly appears and attacks the couple.

Harker is knocked unconscious, but revives the following day and, knowing that he is doomed to become a vampire, finds Dracula and his 'bride' asleep in their coffins. He drives a stake through the heart of the woman, but is too slow to prevent Dracula from waking... The following day, Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) arrives at the castle to find his friend Harker asleep in Dracula's coffin.

Having released Harker from the grip of vampirism with the traditional wooden stake, Van Helsing hurries to the Holmwood residence where Dracula is stalking Lucy. But he is too late. Having failed to convince Lucy's brother Arthur (Michael Gough) of the dangers posed by Dracula, Van Helsing is unable to prevent Lucy's death. Aided by a sceptical Arthur, the feariess vampire killer corners the now undead Lucy in a graveyard, again deploying that trusty mallet and stake.

Dracula retaliates by abducting Arthur's wife Mina (Melissa Stribling) and fleeing to his castle, Arthur and Van Helsing in hot pursuit. Van Helsing succeeds in cornering Dracula, tearing down a curtain to allow sunlight to fall onto the vampire's body. Forming a cross with two candlesticks, Van Helsing forces the vampire back into the light, where he crumbles into dust.

DRACULA was, without doubt, Terence Fisher's finest hour. His version of DRACULA was a dramatic reevaluation of the myth, subtly shifting the emphasis from the supernatural to the sexual aspects of the plot. Where THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN had seen Fisher exploring the destructive repression of sexuality, DRACULA saw him exploring the other side of the coin, the violent release of unchecked sexuality. Lee plays the title role with an aggressive air of decadent arrogance, the personification of aristocratic cruelty. Lee positively exudes threatening sensuality in every scene, adding a disturbing undercurrent to an already sinister film. Whereas Bela Lugosi's Count had been a stodgy, desperately unattractive character, Lee's was the ultimate lady-killer, suave, sophisticated and self-confident. Even his (female) victims responded in a more explicitly sexual manner than had previously been shown on screen - in subsequent Hammer Dracula's, the vampire's bite would provoke increasingly orgasmic reactions from the female victims. Fisher was fully aware of the sexual possibilities of the vampire and was keen to show it on screen: "I think my greatest contribution to the Dracula myth was to bring out the underlying sexual element in the story... Most important was the sexual attraction of Dracula towards his victims which is the fundamental power of evil."

Lee was the perfect choice to play the Count. His physical stature and deep, resonant voice created a truly memorable screen character that no-one has been able to match since. Cushing too was his usual excellent self in a role that was the antithesis of Frankenstein - the Baron had been a calculating (if idealistic) man of science who mocked the fallibility of God and nature while glorifying Man's potential. Van Helsing, on the other hand, is a scientist still caught in the grip of superstition, not afraid to evoke the name and symbols of God to augment his rational approach.

But DRACULA remains Terence Fisher's film. In this one movie, he created a number of set pieces that were to shape the expectations of genre buffs for nearly two decades. Dracula's first appearance, as a menacing silhouette in a doorway, is particularly memorable, as is the stunning shock cut

DRACULA

DRACULA

to a snarling Dracula with his bloodied mouth, just after Harker has been bitten - the contrast between the urbanity of the Count's early appearances and his bestial ferocity here is genuinely shocking. But it is the film's climax that is most fondly remembered - Van Helsing jumps athletically onto a long table and, with a leap worthy of Douglas Fairbanks, tears down the curtains to cast deadly sunlight on the Count.

But of more lasting interest are the smaller, quieter details Fisher uses to embellish the plot, his excellent sense of atmosphere. The dank claustrophobia of the vampire's resting place in the crypt and the spooky graveyard sequence linger long in the memory. Here, Fisher was aided immeasurably by the brooding photography (again in Technicolor) of Jack Ashley and the magnificent score of James Bernard. Mention should also be made of the period sets, designed by Hammer regular Bernard Robinson.

The critics were, again, outraged. The threatening sexuality of the film was just too much for some of them to handle. Many took exception to the graphic disposal of the female vampire in the first half of the film - until Fisher forced the sight of a beautiful, alluring young woman being reduced to a crumbling, aged hag upon an unsuspecting audience, the unsightly death of the vampire's victims was kept well out of the camera's way. But Fisher had different ideas: "It was important to show what happened to them when they were staked... It was important to show the actual release of the vampire."

DRACULA is a complex, involving film that works exceptionally well on a number of levels. It remains Hammer's most perfectly realised work, the finest achievement to that date of the British genre cinema. It could be argued, with plenty of justification, that it remained the best British horror film until as late as last year, with the release of HELLRAISER which, coincidentally, also concerned a form of vampirism linked to the violent release of sexuality. With DRACULA, Fisher freed British horror from the shackles of slavish reworkings of themes and ideas borrowed from American sources - from now on, it would have the unique identity promised by the success of THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. It was the birth of the British Gothic cinema.

NEXT ISSUE: THE RETURN OF FRANKENSTEIN AND DRACULA

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THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

IAN CALCUTT LOOKS AT HAMMER'S "THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF" AND THE NOVEL WHICH INSPIRED IT

Werewolves have a conscience, or at least they do according to Guy Endore in his novel THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS, published in 1933. Terence Fisher directed his moderately faithful film version: THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF for Hammer in 1960, although this film was the result of earlier consequences.

Guy Endore was signed up as a screenwriter for MGM after his novel's publication. In anticipation of an Endore penned movie (which didn't happen) rival studios Universal rushed out their own lupine endeavour THE WEREWOLF OF LONDON (1935). Endore himself collaborated on the screenplay for Karl Freund's wonderful MAD LOVE aka THE HANDS OF ORLAC (1935) and such Tod Browning films as MARK OF THE VAMPIRE (1935) and THE DEVIL DOLL (1936). Later, Universal took more care with the werewolf myth and produced THE WOLF MAN in 1941, a classic to match the previous decade's DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. In a way Endore's novel also ranks alongside the literary classics which inspired those prolific films, but THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS is something of a forgotten masterpiece; it was filmed only once, and the book itself is now out of print in this country.

Hammer's CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF can be seen as a direct descendent of THE WOLF MAN, and as a continuation of their series of classic remakes. Each though, had their individual style and as with Fisher's DRACULA (1958), for CURSE, the writer/producer Anthony Hinds derived his story from a suitable literary source. The basic story for THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS/CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF is fairly simple: an innocent servant girl gives birth to a baby boy after being savagely raped. As an infant, the boy has nightmares about being a wolf; several animals are found mutilated. His brutish instincts are then kept at bay by his loving guardian. After leaving home as a teenager, he is cured by the love of a woman, but when the couple are separated, the werewolf becomes dominant. He eventually comes to a tragic end.

There are however, numerous differences between the novel and the film. Some are negligible ones which will naturally arise in any adaptation, but there are a few major inconsistencies which are puzzling, and even scandalous. One point which must be clarified immediately is the nature of man/wolf transformations. There are three types: the lycanthrope - a human psychotic who believes that he or she turns into a wolf (especially during the phase of the full-moon) but never actually does so; the werewolf - human by day, wolf by night; and the wolf-man - a purely cinematic creation, a metamorphic hybrid which stands on two legs and usually keeps its clothes on as well! In Guy Endore's novel, the character of the boy (Bertrand) is thought to be merely a lycanthrope, but there is some evidence that he is a real werewolf.

In CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF the afflicted sufferer (Leon, played by Oliver Reed) is actually a wolf-man. There are two reasons for this; firstly, the film remains in the tradition of its predecessors like THE WOLF MAN; and secondly, it is impracticable to use real wolves (however, the latter condition has been rectified in this decade by films such as WOLFEN - 1981, THE COMPANY OF WOLVES - 1984, and due to the superb special effects of Rick Baker in AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON - 1981). Werewolves would normally hunt with other wolves in packs, but as wolves are now nearly extinct in many northern hemisphere countries (including Britain), the werewolf has become very much a loner. The earlier abundance of wolves in Europe led to a continuation of the ancient legend, especially in countries like France where in the Fifteenth century there were many trials of people accused of being werewolves, as well as those for witchcraft. This makes the setting for THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS particularly effective; the early action takes place in a small provincial village called Mont d'Arcy during the mid-nineteenth century.

The film, strangely, is set in eighteenth century Spain; in one of those innominate little towns populated entirely by English character actors. According to Alan Frank the change in location "enhances the religious overtones", but there is already plenty of religious symbolism in the novel. Endore frequently mocks religion in his story. The book has a prologue set during the middle ages, where a beggar from a rival town is incarcerated in a castle's dungeon for plotting to kill the master and the inhabitants. He is fed for years on raw meat, and when let out, behaves like an animal.

In the 1800's a descendent of his family, a priest, is responsible for the rape of a pretty young servant girl who then becomes pregnant. The film condenses and simplifies this early passage, making the beggar (played by Richard Wordsworth - great great grandson of the celebrated poet William Wordsworth) the one who rapes the girl; but this destroys the scene-setting tone contained in the book's prologue, and eliminates the scathing attack on the corruption of religion as represented by the foul Father Pitamont. The boy himself is born at Christmas, the result of a conjunction between evil (in the guise of virtue) and a young virgin (a wicked parody of the Nativity). The child's spirit is therefore continually fighting between good and evil; he is the guiltless victim of the crimes of his father and forefathers. Although he seems pleasant enough as a boy, the book is much bleaker about his true character.

CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF has Leon being nurtured in an enviroment of love which restricts his wolfish instincts. The boy of the novel, Bertrand, is brought up in a similar atmosphere even though his guardian (Aymar) is a rather stoic (but not unkind) man. However, he feeds Bertrand on raw meat to satisfy his blood-lust and to suppress the wolf within him. This indicates a more entwined relationship between the boy's human and animal side. There are times when he is quite animal-like even when still human (though it is at these times that he also has his conscience). Indeed, it is as a teenager when with a prostitute, that he gets his first taste of human flesh. The whore is only scratched and bitten in this incident, so it is unlikely that he actually became a wolf. Bertrand thinks and dreams fondly of the girl afterwards, almost as if she were his "first love", which, in a grotesque sense, she is. During one such delusion he even ravages his own mother; a direct replay of Oedipus, it shows how he is never conscious of his actions when his beastly desires take over. What makes this episode all the more shocking is the way in which his mother actually submits calmly to her son's delirious wishes. In Terence Fisher's film, the mother promptly dies giving birth to the boy, thereby avoiding the risk of portraying this taboo affair.

The film also evades exploring the relationship between the boy and his young lover (Cristina, played by Catherine Feller). The couple are superficially presented as simple romantics, devoted to one another through the beauty of love. This temporarily cures the werewolf side of Leon; he is only safe when they are together. Compared to other werewolf movies, this is an improvement, providing a plausible, and intensely human element to the mythology. However, in Guy Endore's text, this adoration is far from wholesome. The girl (in the novel she is called Sophie) sacrifices her body for Bertrand. Every night she lets him cut her skin with a knife

and feed off her blood (as a replacement for his diet of raw meat): "The blood welled up, ruby-red. He put his mouth to it at once and drank greedily. His lips made ugly sucking noises, as he strove to extract all the blood he could."

Before, when Sophie was alone, she suffered a terrible fear of the dark; Bertrand saves her from her nightmares, and in turn, Sophie saves Bertrand from his. This symbiotic, and even sado-masochistic relationship also reveals the close links between werewolves and vampires (the blood drinking episode is strikingly similar to the one in last year's NEAR DARK).

Bertrand's perversity in pursuit of affection exposes his inherant duality: the battle within his soul between love and cruelty. "They felt themselves being sucked under, into that eternal night of nothingness which follows the brief day of life...Her body was a fountain of blood to him, and it was as if her body responded to his needs, like a nursing mother with milk." Bertrand's brutality could even be seen as a reaction against love (particularly the "imitation" of love presented in the form of the prostitute). This is because no matter how fondly he is treated, he is never truly cured. The film implies at one point that he is cured, but this is far too simplistic and cloying.

Both versions of the tale convey an effective sense of the social evil of werewolves. Aside from the metaphysical and mythological elements, it must be remembered that Bertrand/Leon is primarily the result of a rape. The novel and the film both contain a certain stance against authority: the rapist priest of the book, and the evil marquis in the film.

In the novel, Bertrand (aged about 17) runs away from home, defying the orders of his guardian, Aymar. He immediately becomes a wolf again, resulting in the brutal killing of a young man who, Bertrand realizes upon waking next morning, was his best friend. Although he is upset, he knows that he will be hungry later on, and considers sticking an arm from the body into his rucksack to nibble on the way to Paris! The injection of black humour occurs several times in the novel, but this is lacking in the film. It relies instead on light relief from comic performances by Warren Mitchell (later to play TV's Alf Garnett), Peter Sallis, George Woodbridge and the ubiquitous Michael Ripper (as an old drunk).

Bertrand reaches Paris in the significant year of 1870. Within the mass population of the city, his gruesome activities are relatively hidden. There is even a process of "evolution"; after becoming aware of what he does at night, he turns to violating fresh graves to refrain from committing so many murders. The period of 1870-71 is as critical to the novel in as much as it was important to Paris itself; and it is here that Endore makes his most meaningful point. Bertrand was living in Paris during the later part of the Franco-Prussian war - when the city was under siege from the Germans. The population rose in defiance of Versailles, forming the Paris Commune to defend themselves against the invading armies.

This creates more than just a complex political backdrop to the narrative, for during this time the starving Parisians ate dogs, rats, cats and just about anything else. Thousands of political prisoners were executed, and the majority of the Communards themselves were slaughtered when the enemy forces invaded. Many great buildings were deliberately burned down by the Parisians in a final act of defiance.

The details of these events are so shocking that the character of Aymar (who has tracked down Bertrand in Paris) asks himself "what was a werewolf who had killed a couple of prostitutes and dug up a few graves, compared with these bands of tigers slashing at each other with daily increasing ferocity." If such bloodshed continues then the whole human race will be like werewolves, he says. Bertrand is simply a "minor werewolf". Throughout the novel we are given a sympathetic view of the hero, an involuntary victim of a terrible condition; and although Aymar often considered destroying Bertrand, he ends up by defending him. Compared with the atrocities of war, a werewolf is nothing.

In ignoring the political content of the novel, CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF chooses instead to use a nondescript Spanish location, "somewhere" in the eighteenth century. This is the worst travesty of the film adaptation. Hammer were fond of their historical settings (a good opportunity to use pleasant costumes and sets) but they constantly avoided using genuine period detail. The film is pseudohistorical and shallow in its contextual substance, shying away from making any real comments as Guy Endore does in his original, brilliantly constructed prose. In its own right the film is extremely good, but in comparison with the novel it seems that Hammer prefered histrionics to historics.

The film and book do, however, share an excellent, complete roundness of composition. The plots are perfectly created, with one tragic event leading naturally to the next. The cruel irony of fate is shown several times; as an infant, Bertrand recalls a trip out with Bramond (the local hunter) and gets his first taste of blood by kissing a shot squirrel (a passage transposed accurately and effectively in the film). Years later it is Bramond's son (and Bertrand's best friend) Jacques who is hunted down by the werewolf, becoming his first human kill.

Bertrand and Sophie are parted when Bertrand feels unable to suppress his desires any longer and goes off in search of a victim to actually kill; but he picks someone strong, and he is overpowered. Bertrand is court-martialled and sent to a mental institution where he is locked up and tranquilized. During a sedative-induced delirium he thinks he can hear Sophie singing in the cell next to his. He breaks out and goes to "Sophie's" cell only to find a naked mongoloid dwarf sucking a lollipop: "Sophie! What have they done to you?" he cries, and together they leap out of the top floor window to their deaths. Here, the striking and humorous image of the naked dwarf sitting on the bed contrasts sharply with the sorrowful condition of Bertrand's mind. It is interesting that he actually takes his own life instead of being shot with a silver bullet (as happens in CURSE...although it is quite poignant that it is his guardian who kills him). The film's climax is more of a pastiche of the 1931 FRANKENSTEIN (village mob with firebrands) plus THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME - 1939 (the "creature" clambering about on a clocktower, and the nearest the film gets to Gallic allusion!).

THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS, being such a fine novel (cleverly crafted as a supposedly genuine case history complete with detailed annotations) was certain to inspire an above average film. So what we are left with is a literary masterpiece on a difficult subject (werewolves are not renowned for finesse!), plus a cinematic example of how to portray these poor creatures i.e. with sympathy and humanity. With so little literary heritage (Kipling's MARK OF THE BEAST perhaps), Guy Endore's 1933 novel stands outright; and with little competition then or now (80's films have resorted to parody, eg: THE HOWLING and TEENWOLF), CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF - discrepancies intact - is a film to be cherished.

JEWEL IN THE CROWN

MICHAEL WESLEY LOOKS BACK AT SETH HOLT'S LAST FILM - "BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB"

By the 1970's Hammer, Britain's most productive studio of horror movies, was in decline. Attempting to compete with the big boys in Hollywood, and constantly retreading their own ground with greater emphasis on blood and sex to ensnare audiences, they were fast becoming a parody of their own vintage years (the late fifties through the 1960's). It is therefore surprising that by far one of the most significant films in the entire Hammer canon should emerge in 1971 under the directorial control of Seth Holt.

Critic David Quinlan lists Holt's career as "one of the greater tragedies of the British cinema"; certainly it was a chequered one, with many uncompleted projects throughout. On a more personal note, alcoholism contributed to his erratic directorial rate, and it was sadly ironic that his early death should coincide with the making of BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB, far and away his best all round feature. One can only guess at the untapped potential lost through such a tragic event, occurring as it did near the end of shooting of this film and causing Hammer boss Michael Carreras to step in and direct a few last scenes (uncredited).

Taken from Bram Stoker's novel 'Jewel of the Seven Stars', and with a literate, engrossing screenplay by Christopher Wicking, the film concerns the attempted revivification of

GEORGE COULOURIS SPILLS SOME BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB

CORBECK (JAMES VILLIERS) AND THE MUMMY'S HAND

the evil Egyptian Queen Tera in London, set a few decades past. In the arrestingly atmospheric opening, we witness the ritualistic embalming and entombment of Tera by some priests, at the climax of which her right hand is severed and thrown outside to a pack of dogs. Momentarily, the animals are laying on dusty rocks with their throats slashed, a fate which also befalls the Egyptians, and the hand and its ruby ring scuttles off into the sand dunes!

All this we see as the leading female character in the film, Margaret (Valerie Leon), dreams, tossing and turning fitfully against a background of stars. Her father Professor Fuchs (the excellent Andrew Keir) had been responsible for opening Tera's tomb some two decades previously and letting free the ancient power. He was accompanied by Corbeck (the debonair James Villiers), Dandridge (Hugh Burden), Helen Dickerson (Rosalie Crutchley) and Berigan (George Coulouris), the latter three of whom all have an ornamental relic from the historic find (a jackal's skull, a cat and a snake respectively). The fourth member Corbeck, is now actively involved in trying to "reunite Tera with her soul", so strong is his desire for power and knowledge.

The following morning Margaret is given an early birthday present from her father, and lo and behold it's the ruby ring! Neither she nor her boyfriend Tod Browning (Mark Edwards) have ever been allowed down to her father's cellar which is a reconstruction of Tera's tomb complete with Tera herself, the body resplendent with jewels and perfectly preserved; it is in fact the image of Margaret, or vice versa, for at the time of the tomb's opening she was born back in London in Tera's image. Tod's friend Dandridge, having never seen Margaret before, is soon having a mild coronary on being introduced to her, convinced it is the Queen of Darkness revived.

Meantime Corbeck is out shopping, trying to collect the relics which must be regrouped before Tera's rebirth on Margaret's 21st birthday, an event which coincides with the alignment of seven stars in the position they were in during Tera's reign. He first visits Berigan who is now in an asylum (and cared for by two highly unsympathetic warders who refer to him as "Snaky" Berigan for obvious reasons), a task in which he fails. The figure of the cat belongs to the crystal ball-gazing Helen Dickerson, who also intends to hold on to her prize; Dandridge too, is adamant in keeping the jackal's skull, in fact all three characters live in frightened torment, wary of what will happen if Corbeck is successful in acquiring the pieces.

Throughout the film Holt fuses character relationships, plot interest and visual style in abundance near perfectly in such a way that the few violent set pieces that do occur, hit far stronger than they would in less talented hands. These moments mostly involve the relic-owning characters meeting death from Tera's power as each object is magically returned to the makeshift mausoleum in professor Fuch's cellar. The most alarming of these is 'Snaky's' messily jugular demise in which the camera backtracks down the corridors of the asylum, climbs walls to the sound of "the dawn chorus", whizzes round the padded cell, and generally allows Holt an

A D A[illegible] DU[illegible]...

opportunity to show his audience that he knows exactly the sort of feverish ambience he's after and how to obtain it!

Soon, Corbeck visits Margaret and attempts to gain her trust in the task that lays ahead, as Tera is already intermittently posaessing the body of the heroine ("Don't flght it let it flow through you!" he tells her). Gradually she is won over by the forthcoming ritual, attracted to the thought of power and control in the same way that Corbeck is, and she proceeds to vlslt both Dandridge and Dickerson, who meet equally horrific ends to that of Berigan. Even her boyfriend Tod (the one bland character in the film) dies in a car crash after leaving the house in an attempt to stop the sacrllegious plans. Flnally, all is ready for Corbeck's reading of the Scroll of Life, witnessed by both Margaret and her father, who try to flght back futllely at the last moment. In the ensuing struggle (and a scene of real power) both Corbeck and Fuchs die and Margaret fights the revlved Tera, managing to stab her, an act which quite literally brlngs the house down! The last, brilliantly clever, scene shows a 'mummified' girl in a hospital bed, only the eyes visible behind layers of bandages, recovering from being pulled from the rubble of the house. One tantalizing question remains as the credits roll; is it Margaret...or Tera?

This last lmage ls Holt's one concession to past 'Mummy' flims, and a superbly witty one it is too! However, the film overall la far removed from the superficlal Lee/Karloff bandage epics of yesteryear, and obtains a style and thrust all of it's own. It ls worth noting signiflcant contributions by some key membera of the production that add to the mood and strength of the film; firstly, whlle designer Scott MacGregor may not he a Bernard Roblnson, hls sets are colourful, sharp in decor and atmosphere and well used by cameraman Arthur Grant; the editing by Peter Weatherley ls taut and frequently highly energetic (Helen Dickerson's death-by-cat-scratches springs to mind) and yet can pace the film well enough to envelop the viewer in slower scenes, notably the austere and vlvidly horrific prologue. On a few occasions slow motion is incorporated beautifully to glve a dream-llke feel, witness Margaret's somnambullstic wander down from her bedroom to Tera's eerily lit tomb. Most important to the proceedings however, is the exqulsite and haunting musle score by Trlstram Cary; take the subtle, exotically flavoured (and yet unobtrusive) rhythm away from the film and I guarantee that 90% of its atmosphere vanlches; lt ls a brilliant achievement.

Technical aspects aside, Chris Wicking's script is more than worthy of speclal mention; take a section of Margaret's dialogue from a scene in which she is alone with Tod in her father's cellar and looklng at the arresting form of Tera; "I get a feeling of great loneliness, of her dreaming alone of things far dlfferent from those around her; a land far away in miles and years and yet close to her heart. No scheming and malignant priesthoods, no repressive archaic laws and endless rltuals of death, a land where love is the divine possession of the soul". Obviously far removed from the standard Hammer jargon, as entertaining as lt is! Unfortunately the acting is not totally up to the high standard of the dialogue and ideas, with the exception of Keir (so memorable in QUATERMASS AND THE PIT) and James Villiers who plays Corbeck with style, authority and a genuine sense of the character's mlsguided judgement in understandlng just what Tera's rebirth wlll mean in universal terms.

Valerie Leon (remember her from the 'Hi-Karate' ads of the seventies?) seems to have been cast on physical attributes alone, only managing to truly convince in a few scenes, but she is more than compensated for by some entertaining character turns from the llkes of George Coulouris as the babbling 'Snaky' Berlgan; the bizarre Aubrey Morris as the Fuch's family doctor (ambiguously lnvolved in all the sinister events) and by James Cossins and David Jackson as the asylum warders who 'care' for Berigan (you half expect them to haul out the whip and thumbscrews as an added bonus to their working schedule!).

ln closing, we mustn't forget Seth Holt, whose swansong cinematic offering this was. He had already demonstrated his flair for nervy, jarrlng suspense scenes in a couple of black and white Hammer shockers, TASTE OF FEAR (1961) and THE NANNY (1965) (a tense psychological melodrama with Bette Davis in her 'Baby Jane' element). Here, though, he created a film that expertly combines standard gore (anyone looking for o profusion of ravaged throats in their movie diet need look no further!), arty visuals (some of the juxtaposition of images would do Nicolas Roeg justice), with the elegant Hammer look, and a llttle bit more, an edge as indefinable as it is memorable. ln summation, it surely must stand as the best and most intelligent product of the final few years of Britain's late-lamented genre factory.

Ultimately, this stylish adult nightmare and lts llterary source led to an appalling Charlton Heston starrer of a few years back, THE AWAKENING (1980) which was cast-lron proof that blg budget stars and cameramen (the Oscar-winning Jack Cardiff) go up a blind alley without a llttle ingredient called 'talent' (Mike Newell being the director of record, for lack of a better, lf more profane, word!).

Seth Holt's death from cirrhosls of the liver at the age of 48 robbed Britain of a powerful, clever film maker. BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB is flnal testimony to hls skill and talent and, like the ruby ring with the lingering image of the seven stars withln lt, lt is a real gem.

PROFESSOR FUCHS (ANDREW KEIR) AND THAT HAND AGAIN.

DRACULA III

JOHN HUDSON LOOKS BACK AT ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR "DRACULA" SEQUELS - "DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE"

This was the third film in Hammer's DRACULA series (the fourth counting THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, the story of one of the Count's disciples), and by 1968 when it was released, there was no pretence of being an adaptation of the original novel: the credits read "Screenplay by John Elder, based on the character created by Bram Stoker". Anthony Hinds' screenplay is a fairly standard one embroidered with the occasional touch of originality: a priest (Ewan Hooper) and his Monsignor (Rupert Davies), trying to exorcise Count Dracula forever, succeed only in reviving the Count (Christopher Lee) from his tomb in the ice of the castle moat.

Barred from his castle by the Monsignor's crucifix, Dracula recruits the weak and cowardly priest as his assistant and makes his home in the basement of the Cafe Johann where he can vampirise the waitress Zena (Barbara Ewing). His next intended victim is the Monsignor's niece Maria (Veronica Carlson), also girlfriend of the film's young hero Paul (Barry Andrews). Paul is an atheist and needs the power of the church to defeat the vampire. Zena and the Monsignor are killed, but he finally coerces the cowardly priest into helping him and Dracula is destroyed.

The film can be summarised as lively, gory, and, above all, modern. The setting and dress is turn-of-the-century Europe, but Hammer set out to entertain rather than making authentic reconstructions, and the speech and behaviour of the characters is updated to the 1960's. A reflection of the greater permissiveness of the time is the emphasis on sex: both of Dracula's victims show in their reactions that they find his visits highly erotic. One of the most original moments was also one of the most criticised at the time: the Count is staked through the heart by Paul, but because Paul is an atheist and cannot pray, Dracula manages to pull out the stake and survives.

Christopher Lee himself argued that this idea should be cut; "Everyone knows that a stake through the heart is the very end of a vampire. I protested, but it was overruled. It is an extremely gruesome sequence: the blood comes pouring out." It offended the 1968 critics, who saw it as pointless sadism. We can only wonder what they would have made of today's "Stalk 'n' Slash" movies, which make the bloodiest of Hammer films look mild. Today the failed staking can be seen as a good idea which adds to the excitement and suspense. After all, in the battle between Good and Evil the hero must have faith, so there is nothing illogical in it.

On the whole the film is well cast. Christopher Lee will probably never be surpassed as Dracula. In this film as in all others in the series, he is able to convey the sinister menace of the character as well as any other actor, and in moments of violent action shows a ferocity which makes all the other contenders in the part (Bela Lugosi, Jack Palance, Frank Langella and Louis Jourdan) seem bland, even feeble. Lee was reportedly something of an authority on supernatural lore, hence his concern for details such as the correct way to kill a vampire. His knowledge no doubt helped give his portrayals an extra air of authenticity.

A TYPICAL HAMMER PUB WELCOME FOR RUPERT DAVIES

As the cowardly priest, Ewan Hooper is convincing, while Rupert Davies as the Monsignor also gives a competent performance. However, as David Pirie pointed out in his A HERITAGE OF HORROR, these two together never seem strong enough to pose a serious threat to Dracula. At the risk of making this film too much like its predecessors, it might have benefitted from the authority of Peter Cushing as Van Helsing. As Paul, Barry Andrews comes across as a much more likeable and interesting character than, say, Dennis Waterman in the later SCARS OF DRACULA, and his scenes with Michael Ripper as the baker and Barbara Ewing as Zena are wonderfully cosy. Barbara Ewing is so sympathetic as the frustrated waitress that we feel a genuine horror at her arbitrary death at the hands of the Count. Her performance is in startling contrast to Veronica Carlson's: one critic compared Carlson to a goldfish, and in the range of emotions she portrays, it's easy to see why!

Despite this one doubtful performance, the subsidiary characters are in general as compelling as Dracula himself. This raises another slight problem: Director Freddie Francis has himself said: "I was more interested in the love affair between the girl and the boy than with Dracula, he was just a fly in the ointment." And this shows. Perhaps emphasising the "normal" characters is the only real alternative to repeating Bram Stoker's original story in every sequel, and in this episode it does not greatly detract from the entertainment value. In later films, however, Dracula was increasingly relegated to the role of an incidental character, culminating in 1973 in THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA: This was interesting in itself but had no connection with Stoker's character except the name, and it came as no surprise that following this film Lee decided to give up the part for good.

Freddie Francis'directorial strengths and weaknesses were clearly different from those of Terence Fisher, his predecessor in the DRACULA series. Fisher was always keen to remind interviewers that Hammer's horror films were basically Morality Plays and, reflecting this, his strong points were a powerful sense of continuity and the ability to balance the Good and Evil elements perfectly. His traditional approach sometimes tended to make his films seem stodgy and unimaginative. Freddie Francis had trained as a cinematographer and hence he brought a powerful visual sense to DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE.

A major concern seemed to be clarity of the image: with his Director of Photography Arthur Grant, Francis gave a particularly vivid and three-dimensional quality to the images: a tremendous relief after watching old Hollywood films with their garish colour and images which too often run the gamut from soft-focus to blurred and back again. Art Director Bernard Robinson amply demonstrated why a Hammer executive said of him: "He could build sets out of nothing." The cafe, inn and in particular, the Monsignor's house, have a lavish and expensive look which belies the film's low budget. The rooftop scenes and Dracula's visits to Maria are wonderfully constructed and lit and bring the Dracula story to life in a way never seen before, even in Fisher's films. Yet there is one peculiarity in the photography of DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE: many of the scenes featuring Dracula are edged with a centre-spot filter which gives an amber halo round the edges of the picture - the scenes affected often seem to be chosen at random, and sometimes this adds to the beauty of the photography, at other times it is merely distracting. Could it be nothing more artistic than a technical problem with the film stock?

On the negative side, Francis' choreography of action scenes is often clumsy. The most obvious example is Dracula's resurrection, a scene which would no doubt make the director wince if he saw it today. Having been left far behind on the journey to the castle, the priest suddenly seems to catch up with the Monsignor, falls over a wall and, in an incredibly unconvincing scene, cuts his head on some polystyrene rocks. His blood trickles directly into Dracula's ice tomb, reviving him.

The music score is by another of Hammer's stalwarts, James Bernard, and helps the atmosphere enormously, from the opening titles and the doomy hints of the 'Dies Irae' through Bernard's own three-tone Dracula theme (used in all the films) through various moods from romance to pathos. No film composer of the time came near Bernard in his range of ex-

HAMMER SPECIAL

THE MONSIGNOR (RUPERT DAVIES) AND MARIA (VERONICA CARLSON)

PAUL (BARRY ANDREWS) AND ZENA (BARBARA EWING)

pression. His music was in the best tradition of 20th Century English composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst and, most of all, Britten: in fact, Bernard actually studied with Benjamin Britten, so his credentials are excellent.

The story reaches full momentum in the closing minutes. Shortly after the attempted staking, Dracula abducts Maria and is pursued by Paul to his castle. During a struggle, Dracula is knocked over the battlements and impaled on a large crucifix thrown away by Maria. In a marvellously grisly scene, he staggers around like a dying fly, makes pleading gestures upwards (to Heaven?) and weeps tears of blood before he finally disintegrates.

It's a sobering thought that this year marks the film's twentieth anniversary. In these days of endless sequels its title seems quite original - no doubt as a 1988 release it would be called DRACULA III - but in the sixties it would have just seemed typically decadent and, in the biblical overtones, even sacrilegious. Tastes in films have also changed since then, and a common criticism of Hammer films now is that "They're not scary". You could argue that they're not meant to be - they are fantasy adventures with plenty of colour and (relatively) violent action: adult fairy tales. There cannot be much suspense because we know that Dracula will be destroyed at the end. The interest is in seeing how it happens, and in a standard of presentation which is astonishingly high considering the tiny budgets available. If today's TV viewers watch DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE in this spirit, they will find it highly entertaining - and nowhere as anaemic as most of the old Universal efforts!

If you want your fanzine mentioned in the next issue of SAM make sure we receive it by June 15. Due to limited space it is not always possible to repeat info for the same issue of a zine though we do endeavour to mention all new issues of zines and all new zines received.

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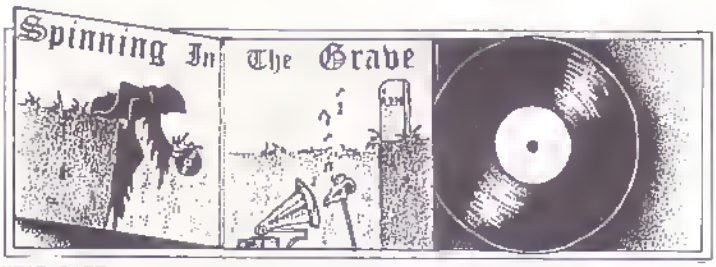


NEAR DARK

Music by Tangerine Dream — Silva Screen Records 026

For a long time now, I have believed and hoped that Tangerine Dream would begin to produce the imaginative and striking kind of scores I knew they were capable of, but during their film scoring career they have seldom shown the real talent which they undoubtedly possess. Their score for FIRESTARTER, although reasonably effective was one clear example of a missed opportunity. Only with their fine music for THE KEEP have they hinted that they could become a force to be reckoned with.

But now with NEAR DARK, Tangerine Dream have finally arrived, producing an exciting and progressive film score which is one of the film's strongest elements, giving the stunning visuals tremendous impact and creating a pervading haunting atmosphere.

At first however, with the opening track "Caleb's Blues", an uninspired piece which is best forgotten, it seems we are heading for another disappointment but just as hope begins to fade, "Pick up at High Noon" and the excellent "Rain in the Third House" follow and we're on course for a winner.

Also worthy of particular praise is the track "Bus Station" which incorporates "Mae's Theme". This is a long section at over eight minutes but its first half (heard over the end titles in the movie) is Tangerine Dream at their very best.

Overall this is a successful album, although the score works a lot better in the context of the film than as a purely musical experience.

M.H.

SUSPIRIA

Music by Goblin — Cinevox Records CIA 5005

Goblin may seem to have had more than their fair share of coverage in SAMHAIN but it would be pointless to have mentioned their other scores without eventual recourse to SUSPIRIA, which many consider to be their best, though I think TENEBRAE gives it a run for its money.

The claustrophobic world of SUSPIRIA, portrayed in the film through the twisting labyrinth of corridors and passages that permeate the Freiburg Tanz Academie and help hide its sinister occurences, has been atmospherically captured in Goblin's finely realised score. It is certainly a unique work in the way that it converts background, almost incidental, noises into major foreground music integral to the score's own character. Hence the continual barrage of whispered vocals and sporadic hisses of "Witch". This undying noise and the way that some of the tracks merge into each other increases the score's intensity and overall claustrophobia, as there is no escape from the wailing witches and hissing heretics.

The score's main theme uses these elements, combined with the song's crazed humming, nursery rhyme bells and its mind-bendingly incessant drums. All reinforce the feelings of confusion and the acoustic guitar contribution is a relic from the Dark Ages which themselves threaten to infect the modern age of SUSPIRIA.

The cosmopolitan appeal and world wide influence of the Mother of Whispers is alluded to in "Marcos" with its oriental sounding rattling percussion punctuated only by the weird and wonderful synth spirts and splutters that spit out like a boiling cauldron.

"Black Forest" also contains many diverse elements ranging from the restrained acoustic guitar melody and bass harmonics to the waves of synth and jazz room sax that all decorate the song. Later the break-neck percussion gives way to a virtuoso lead guitar solo featuring Led Zeppelin style question and answer solo phrases, accompanied by a roving bass line that Rush would be proud of.

Overall then, Goblin, appropriately named here, have plunged into the dark depths of witchcraft and magic and produced a work that is immersed in incantations and clandestine activities, and gives the illusion of dark powers encroaching, creeping up on the modern world, all wrapped up in an atmosphere of claustrophobic discomfort.

The film SUSPIRIA may concentrate on stealth and whispers but it possesses a music score that can be openly shouted about.

A.B.

THE FOG

Music composed by Crosbie and Phillips - available on cassette only, from 26 IOLANTHE DRIVE, EXETER, DEVON

I must admit I've never heard a soundtrack to a book before though it's certainly an interesting idea. The music itself is an assured debut from Crosbie and Phillips (well it's a debut to me anyway!) featuring rolling synth melodies and cascading, whispering percussion that welcomes us to the onslaught of the billowing title fog that is the story's malevolent force.

The themes are intelligently arranged and matched to the book's action managing to capture some of the work's cloying atmosphere and apocalyptic view of the country in turmoil with lunacy and carnage rife among both urban and country life. The music in its quieter moods evokes other diverse influences ranging from Mike Oldfield, Alien Sex Fiend in their more restrained titles and Tangerine Dream who themselves have contributed some fine scores to the horror genre; THE KEEP being the most memorable example.

Despite the overall impressiveness of the score, its use solely of synthesisers leaves it somewhat one dimensional and lacking in depth. This shouldn't detract though from what is basically a promising work that is plainly a stepping stone to greater things in the future. Whatever you do though "for goodness sake don't leave this on James Herbert's chair" as I'm not sure what he would make of it.

A.B.

THE OMEN AND OTHER THEMES - 50 YEARS OF CLASSIC HORROR FILM MUSIC

Various — Silva Screen Records 017

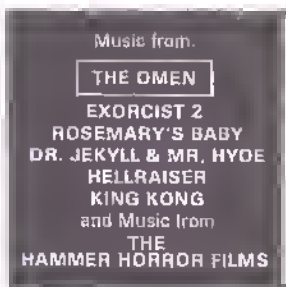
If you want to read a collection of some of the best horror fiction ever published there are a million and one anthology books you can pick up but soundtrack equivalents are all too few and far between. All the more reason therefore to celebrate Silva Screen's release of THE OMEN AND OTHER THEMES which features some of the best genre music committed to disc.

Any collection that begins with Jerry Goldsmith's superb theme from THE OMEN has got to be onto a winner and sure enough the only real black spot on this LP is Reagan's Theme from EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC but then as the Jacksons would say: "One bad apple don't spoil a whole bunch of girls" and it would take a lot more than EXORCIST II to spoil a collection that includes the Resurrection theme from HELLRAISER at the most recent end of the "50 Years" and at the other end Kong's entrance from the original KING KONG.

You could argue that James Bernard's music from Hammer's SHE has no place on an album of horror themes but who's nitpicking? It's one of Hammer's best and most beautifully haunting themes. Indeed Hammer buffs really get their money's worth from 50 YEARS OF... which also includes music from THE VAMPIRE LOVERS, FEAR IN THE NIGHT and DOCTOR JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE. Anyone lucky enough to possess a copy of the old 1974 LP HAMMER PRESENTS DRACULA will already be familiar with these themes which are long overdue for the re-release treatment.

Full marks then to Silva Screen for providing genre soundtrack collectors with a real solid gold treat.

A.J.



TEN COPIES TO BE WON

Okay, as you can see from the above review, THE OMEN AND OTHER THEMES is an absolute must for your collection. Well now we're giving you the chance to win one of ten copies of the album courtesy of SILVA SCREEN RECORDS.

All you have to do is answer the simple question below and then send your answer on a postcard (or the back of an envelope) to: "OMEN", SAMHAIN, 19 ELM GROVE ROAD, TOPSHAM, EXETER, DEVON EX3 0EQ to arrive no later that July 15. The first ten correct entries pulled out of the bag after that date will find a copy of the album spinning its way in their direction.

QUESTION - WHAT ARE THE FULL TITLES OF THE TWO SEQUELS TO "THE OMEN"?

TALES OF MYSTERY AND IMAGINATION
Edgar Allan Poe (The Mystic Press) £14.95

A brand new reprint of the classic edition of Poe's tales of horror and fantasy, featuring the marvellous line drawings of Harry Clarke. It includes eight rarely seen colour illustrations which, together with the 24 in black and white, perfectly capture the macabre mood and style of the stories. Clarke's work is a kind of cross between Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Rackham - gothic, dramatic and elaborate.

The short stories date back to the mid 19th Century, and the edition from which this facsimile is taken first appeared in 1919. Those familiar with Poe will need no introduction to such stories as THE BLACK CAT, FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, THE TELL-TALE HEART and THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM, but those unacquainted with his works should check out our feature on the man in issue seven of SAM. The book is also a chance to see some of his lesser known tales like SILENCE - A FABLE and MORELLA, but they are nearly all worth a look.

At £14.95 this volume is really for collectors only, but with the re-emergence of the colour plates it probably merits the price. Well-bound in good quality paper, it is a must for all Poe enthusiasts; and it is pleasing to see that these masterly tales are being constantly reprinted - ensuring that the spirit of Poe lives on.
I.C.

HOW TO DRAW AND SELL COMIC STRIPS FOR NEWSPAPERS AND COMIC BOOKS!
Alan McKenzie (Macdonald Orbis) £12.95

I mention this book for two reasons. Firstly it's written by Alan McKenzie whose past association with HALLS OF HORROR (artwork from which is featured in the book) makes it of immediate interest to Samhainians. Secondly, we do receive many comic strips from readers looking to get their work published and if you are one of those readers then this book is invaluable.

As well as extensive information about mastering the comic strip the book takes it one step further with details of how to go about selling your work so if that's where your interests lie then get a copy today and who knows where it could lead?
A.J.

PAST FORGETTING - MEMOIRS OF THE HAMMER YEARS
Peter Cushing (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) £9.95

Despite the sub title and the promise that "In response to public demand" Peter Cushing has recalled the Hammer years, there's an awful lot of this book that is nothing to do with horror film making. Admittedly not as much as the first volume, PETER CUSHING - AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, but enough to perhaps put off some readers.

I must say I wasn't put off and found this volume just as entertaining and enlightening as its predecessor, my only real grumble being that at just over 100 pages in length, it's a very quick read. Thankfully there's nothing quite as upsetting in it as the chapter in the last book in which Cushing recounts (with amazing frankness) the death of his wife Helen, and it its film anecdotes you're looking for then you won't be disappointed. Did you know, for example, that Cushing played most of his STAR WARS scenes as Grand Moff Tarkin in a pair of carpet slippers? Or that it was Cushing who suggested that his character spear Chris Lee in THE MUMMY after he saw the poster art for the film which featured Kharis with a hole right through his stomach with a beam of light passing through it?

And then there's the scene in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES that was shot using children as Holmes and Watson in order to give the impression of a huge hound but don't let me give it all away here, get a copy of the book for yourself and find out just why Bernard Cribbins walked like that in SHE! With 32 pages of illustrations, PAST FORGETTING is a very human insight into one of the truly great legends of horror cinema. And isn't it about time he was knighted?
A.J.

THE TOMMYKNOCKERS
Stephen King (Hodder and Stoughton) £11.95

When author Bobbi Anderson trips over a clump of metal in her back garden she unwittingly triggers a chain of events which change the lives of everyone in the small Maine town of Haven.

Bobbi, with the aid of poet and professional drunk Jim Gardener, begins to excavate the object and as more of it is revealed she, and most of the other villagers, become invested with the ability to invent incredibly advanced machines from simple household objects and a few ordinary batteries. Along with these new talents however come some other, more disturbing developments. Everyone seems to be losing inordinate numbers of teeth and taking an increasing dislike to out-of-towners, killing most of the ones who enter or try to leave.

It soon becomes apparent that Bobbi has discovered an ancient spaceship - one possibly as old as Earth itself. As more of the craft is exposed the greater the power it seems to exert over the inhabitants of the village. Only Jim Gardener appears unchanged by the mysterious influence and it is on his shoulders that the future of the village (and consequently the rest of the world) balances.

At first sight then it would appear that THE TOMMYKNOCKERS is a story whose roots are science fiction but this is not the case. There are elements of science in the story (the spaceship, the gadgets) but it is more an air of mystery that surrounds these things so in that context the story is more a supernatural one than an SF one.

What makes this a real King novel though is the presence of so many of his "trademarks". The setting is a well known one to King fans, the small village set in the backwoods of Maine. There are references to characters and places from other novels, The Shop government agency from FIRESTARTER and the town of Derry from IT are two examples. There is also the inevitable presence of humour which is fast becoming one of the most familiar hallmarks of King's fiction.

All in all then an enjoyable read though perhaps slightly longer than it really needs to be. Some would say that King can't write enough so who is to say what is too long and what isn't. Certainly the novel is no let-down and is good a way as any to mark a coda in his writing career as Anything he has recently released.
R.P.

TALES FROM THE NIGHTSIDE
Charles L. Grant (Futura) £2.95

Book reviews are only an expression of an opinion and no amount of damnation or praise should make someone more or less inclined to buy what is being reviewed. Unless...Yes, there are exceptions and I hope that this will prove to be one of them. The exceptions are usually those books which have a bit more going for them than just the text. I'll come to the text in a minute but what are the extras on offer in this paperback? Well, anyone with the original Arkham House hardcover copy of this set will know that there is an excellent forward by Stephen King which gives us a guide to the kind of thing we can expect from this group of 15 short stories. There are also some beautiful illustrations which complement a number of the stories. All of this is included in the Futura edition which makes the £3 worth spending even before you read any of the stories.

What really stands out from all else here though is the sheer strength of the tales themselves. Nothing which Grant has released since this set was first published in 1981 has come near the power of these stories. A bold statement perhaps, but one which I believe to be true. This volume encompasses everything which the fiction of Charles Grant represents: marrow chilling terror that has the razor-edge to cut before you even know it is there. You don't have to be told that something BAD is happening here, those seeds have been sown for you in the oblique and subtle hints that have gone before. The horror is all the stronger for being whispered, not shouted.

Finally though, the book must speak for itself and I hope that for many people it will. With so much true quality horror fiction now being published it is very difficult to pick out any truly outstanding material but there is no doubt that this book would go straight to the top. For £3 there is no way you can go wrong with this one - honest!!
R.P.

AFTER ALICE DIED
Margaret Bingley (Grafton) £2.95

Delightfully tacky...What more can I say. Buy It!
P.L.

OPERA 105 minutes

When the Diva Cecova takes the theatrical injunction to "Break a leg" too literally on the opening night of a new production of Verdi's "Macbeth" (performances of which are traditionally associated with bad luck), it proves her understudy Betty (Cristina Marsillach)'s big break. She attracts rave reviews and, because this is a Dario Argento movie she also attracts a stalking psycho killer, one with a most peculiar modus operandi - this character's idea of a big night out is to torment Betty by slaughtering her nearest and dearest before her very eyes. On two occasions she is actually tied to a column her eyes held open with pins while the killer does his or her thing.

So, who is responsible? Is it the disgruntled Cecova, Marco the director (played by Ian Charleson as an Argento clone), his jealous girlfriend Antonell Vitale (Argento's current paramour), police inspector Urbano Barberini or Betty's agent Myra (Daria Nicolodi)? And what precisely is his or her motivation? As usual the answers to these questions are of secondary importance to the astonishing set pieces for which they serve as pretext. With OPERA Argento finally does for the camera what Jimi Hendrix did for the guitar, pushing the use of his chosen instrument into realms hitherto unimagined, giving the impression that he can make it do whatever he wants. Indeed, the camera work has become so fluid that the machine gun editing which was once such an integral part of Argento's style, has now been rendered obsolete.

At the climax of the film the camera circles the ceiling of the auditorium as the raven flies to attack the culprit. Elsewhere it weaves in and out of obstacles to follow Betty on epic tracking shots. Argento's lens vibrates, mists over or zooms in on minute detail as the plot demands. OPERA is a visual treat and no mistake.

I even loved Sergio Stivaletti's pulsating brain which has been rightly castigated for its less than perfect realisation but has the same savage, surreal effect as the naked beating heart in the title sequence of FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET. Best of all Argento repeats the slow motion bullet from that film to cap a supremely suspenseful sequence in shattering style - though I had been briefed beforehand as to exactly what would happen in this scene it still had me leaping out of my seat. Here is a moment to match anything that Argento has previously achieved in terms of impact and - considering who is on the receiving end at the payoff - sheer malice. I should also mention that Argento's biggest ever budget has allowed him to meticulously evoke the splendour and spectacle of the Italian opera scene.

Aside from such obvious influences as THE BIRDS and THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, Argento has built his film around images straight out of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and PEEPING TOM, in fact the explicit manner in which he attacks his central theme of voyeurism can be traced right back to Jacobean tragedies, so it is disingenious (to say the least) of Argento to claim authorship of these images, supposedly deriving from his frustration at viewers who turn away from scenes of violence in his films.

Extrapolating from comments he made in the documentary WORLD OF HORROR and in a CINEFANTASTIQUE interview, my understanding of Argento's theory is that both he and his audience can only benefit from his work if they will suffer through the worst he can show them and experience the maximum cathartic effect. Ironically some censor or distributor has spiked this intention by drastically trimming key murder scenes in the version I saw which comes in four minutes short of the original 105. Going by Argento's own theory perhaps this is why I didn't fall in love with OPERA at first site and had to be seduced over subsequent viewings. More probably I got the feeling that Argento was retreading, however deftly, old territory rather than progressing in the manner that was signposted by PHENOMENA.

Argento was obviously stunned by the critical shellacking handed out to his last film which he and I still regard as a masterpiece. That film's warmth and sense of light and shade is missing from OPERA, although Argento has stubbornly condensed its essence into the last five minutes, an extraordinary coda which also contains a final twist that is outrageous even by his standards. Here Argento drops a pretty strong hint that PHENOMENA is the kind of film he would like to be making. Presumably OPERA's box office success in Italy for the Brothers Cecchi Gori will give him the chance to indulge in this desire in the next film they will bankroll for him, reportedly (as if you couldn't guess) the conclusion of the Three Mothers trilogy.
J.M.

PRISON 103 minutes Entertainment

For some years now Charles Band's Empire Pictures have been churning out cheap but generally entertaining (TRANCERS, ZONE TROOPERS, RE-ANIMATOR, FROM BEYOND etc) little movies, mostly it seems for the video market. With PRISON they are finally trying to break into the mass market; it's reputedly Empire's most expensive production to date and certainly has a gloss to it that has been lacking in the company's earlier films.

The story centres around a wrongly executed prisoner whose evil spirit lingers on in a prison to extract revenge on the warden responsible for his death, and anyone else who happens to cross his path. A slick but mindless action-horror film, it keeps the attention throughout the entire 103 minutes running time though never tests the intellect and doesn't linger in the mind afterwards.

The prison setting is an excellent idea, providing plenty of long narrow corridors and enclosed claustrophobic rooms wherein the vengeful spirit can have its way with its hapless victims. In this respect the film tries to be like ALIEN (with Albert Band's score particularly enhancing this feeling), though the ideas are never really sufficiently developed. Also the evil spirit is surprisingly non-selective in who it kills, with apparently innocent inmates and guards getting it to the same extent as the real bad guys.

As with most modern horror films the murders provide the highlights of the movie, with two particularly outstanding sequences, the first involving an inmate and a vicious heating duct and the second wherein a vicious guard has a run-in with some animated barbed wire.

With a credible script, decent acting and excellent photography by Mac Ahlberg, PRISON is definitely a cut above most of the earlier Empire films and although it is no masterpiece waiting to be discovered, it is solid horror entertainment.
P.G.

THE PIED PIPER Electric Pictures

This is a fascinating stop-frame puppet film from Czechoslovakia based on the well-known myth. Although set in an overall moral framework, director Jiri Barta's dark vision includes numerous gruesome images. In the town market, faces get more and more grotesque as buyers haggle; when a rat steals what looks suspiciously like a silver tart, it gets clubbed to an immediate and bloody death. Elsewhere, a beautiful woman tries on a jewel round her neck - unaware that part of it has been bent into a fatal spike which cuts her throat - while the local council gorge themselves on blood and flesh in the town hall (imitated by the rats underneath the table). Towards the end, after the Piper has been rewarded - for leading the rats out of the city and into the river to a tune on his pipe - with a button instead of the 1000 guilders promised, he plays his pipe again. This time, peole start sprouting tails and running on all fours before plunging into the river.

The film is punctuated by images of grinding mechanisms and other automata, which lie at the heart of the town (and, by inference, of its social system) and which slow to a halt (after a rape scene) when the sand in the mechanism's hour glass runs out. Barta has used unique sets for his model animation which can best be described as three dimensional reliefs. Not only is the film technically innovative, but it is one of those rare examples of 'pure cinema' where the visual storytelling skill eliminates the need to understand dialogue - the print being released here is in Czech without subtitles, and stands up perfectly adequately without them.

This is being coupled with Barta's earlier - an equally essential - short THE EXTINCT WORLD OF GLOVES, in which stop-frame animated gloves romp through a brief history of the Twentieth Century (and its cinema) from UN CHIEN ANDALOU, via the Third Reich and "Frederico Bellini", to a flying film can version of CE3K complete with flashing lights.
J.C.

NIGHT OF THE DEMONS 86 minutes Palace Premiere

Not to be confused with Jacques Tourneur's similarly titled NIGHT OF THE DEMON (1957) or the "video nasty" from 1981 of the same name. This is a low-budget independent movie from Kevin G. Tenney, the director of last year's WITCHBOARD. NIGHT OF THE DEMONS is reminiscent of both THE EVIL DEAD and Lamberto Bava's DEMONS; fluid, roaming camera sequences, plus incidents like eye-poppings, all recall Sam Raimi's film. There are further cinematic references with the creatures gathering together at one point looking like something straight out of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, and there is a glimpse of someone's gravestone with the suitable last name of Romero.

The story follows ten kids who hold a Halloween party in an old deserted house which used to be a funeral parlour. On one Halloween night in the past, the whole household was slaughtered, and since then the place has remained empty. While the kids are partying, a demon spirit rises from the basement and possesses one of the girls. Soon almost all the kids are sprouting large fangs, claws and facial blemishes; and for the two remaining, it becomes a fight for life.

As the demons become rampant, the house turns typically nightmarish; full of shadows and hellish goings on. The film contains numerous fake menacing situations, teasing and flirting with the viewer, revealing nothing when there seems to be an important build-up. This philandering ceases with the eruption of the demons, manifesting as the release of suppressed sexuality; a girl kisses another girl "I'm into all sorts of stuff tonight" she says, and a couple copulate in a coffin. There is even a moment of erotic surreality in which a girl decorates her breast with lipstick only to watch the tube disappear into her nipple when she pushes it down.

There is some continuation of the kids' personalities (what little is evident) into that of the demonic possessions; a shy girl - even as a demon - still says "Stop looking at me". Despite what the trailer suggests, the film is actually rather slow paced and the interest is sporadic; but it has a sick sense of humour and an odd feel to it which may earn it a cult audience. "Is everybody on drugs or something?" asks a character at one point; no, but the scriptwriter probably was and what's more it's probably the best frame of mind in which to fully enjoy this movie!
I.C.

CELLAR DWELLER 74 minutes Entertainment in Video

The latest from Empire Productions, like their earlier ZONE TROOPERS, has a comic book narrative with specific cartoon references. The film's prologue features Jeffrey Coombs as Colin Childress, cartoonist for a horror comic called, naturally enough, CELLAR DWELLER. He is also into black magic, and reads in his guide book that "To contemplate evil is to ask evil home". Consequently the story he is drawing becomes real and the cellar creature appears and murders a girl. Childress destroys the monster but dies in the fire which follows.

Forty years later a pretty young cartoonist called Whitney Taylor (Deborah Mullowney) arrives at the same house, now an institute for the arts. Among the students at the college is Amanda (Pamela Bellwood) one of Whitney's former adversaries. Whitney moves down to the cellar which her idol (Colin Childress) lived, worked and died in. She begins her own drawing, a pastiche of Cellar Dweller, but soon finds the old magic book. After clashes with Amanada and also with the sour old mistress (Yvonne De Carlo from THE MUNSTERS), Whitney relieves her anger by drawing these people being attacked by the creature. Obviously the creature really does appear and soon half the inhabitants are being killed, munched and swallowed by the monster.

CELLAR DWELLER was directed by John Carl Buechler (Empire's regular special effects make-up man) whose first directorial outing was TROLL. The monster itself is a wonderful creation, quite spirited and even likeable. The theory of subconscious desires is interesting, but the film suffers from a low budget, rushed schedule and generally unimaginative script. There are some amusing moments, but the biggest gag is in the end credits:"A good cast is worth repeating" just like the old Universal pictures. If Empire think they've produced a film of that calibre then they must be joking.
I.C.

THE DEAD OF NIGHT 87 minutes Medusa

The original DEAD OF NIGHT - produced by Ealing Studios in the forties - compiled a number of classic nightmarish ghost/horror tales. One concerned a man possessed by a room he sees in an antique mirror, and is still pretty frightening even today. The newer film, title complete with definite article, also deals with possession via a mirror, but is generally far less terrifying.

Director Deryn Warren seems to have undergone intensive study shots of feet in Hitchcock movies and gone out of his way to reproduce many of them here. A shower sex scene has shots of four legs/feet in the bath recalling Janet Leigh's feet about to step into the shower in PSYCHO, and some other shots from this sequence are similarly duplicated (although sadly not the groundbreaking effect of the original PSYCHO sequence). Similarly, early shots of the heroine's feet running along the street recall a fast forward version of similar shots in BLACKMAIL.

The fairly risible plot concerns Sara, who gets beaten up a lot by her boyfriend, flees to her sister's and picks up a book of Haitian magic (the characters in these movies never seem to learn!). She promptly gets possessed by an Egyptian princess/seductress called Sura who goes around the local bars in Sara's body picking up men, going back home with them for the obligatory sexual workout and then performing such exciting acts as ripping their throats out. The actual possession is effective enough, double-exposing evil princess onto Sara at her mirror, and little bits of gory make-up are used sparingly and effectively as and when required. There's also a fair bit of camera prowling-around-the-house, not to mention a sub-Carpenter electronic score.

The one generally frightening moment occurs when Sara unexpectedly sees the princess's apparition in her bathroom mirror, and for a split-second one is in the territory of the earlier DEAD OF NIGHT. Certainly worth a look at although I suspect the whole thing might have fallen apart on the big screen. Then again, since it seems to have been post-produced on video, its makers probably never thought of it in those terms anyway.
J.C.

RAWHEAD REX 90 minutes Vestron

Be jeez and be gorra. It would appear that we are in the land of the bogs and the little people. Why here? Well you see not all the people are that little. In fact one of them is about eight feet high and he bites people's heads off. His name? Rawhead Rex.

This is the cinematic translation of Clive Barker's short story of the same name (to be found in BOOKS OF BLOOD III) by the team of George Pavlou and Green Man Productions who also made the Barker flick UNDERWORLD. Now Clive was reportedly none too pleased with the results of UNDERWORLD and not the greatest fan of RAWHEAD. Why? I don't know. Admittedly I'd probably feel different about it if I'd written the original story but although it isn't the zenith of "monster on the rampage" pix, it certainly isn't the worst.

Buried under a large stone phallus in a farmer's field is Rawhead. Asleep for centuries until hapless Mr Farmer puts monetary considerations above those of life and limb and pulls the stone down. And that's when the fun begins.

Token American Hollanbrook (David Dukes) has brought his family over to Ireland with him while he treks around collecting material on Pagan sites that have since been taken over and used as sites for Christian worship. The exploration of Pagan/Christian ideals is kept to an absolute minimum. In fact as far as the original story goes in its examination of this, the film is a rather eviscerated retelling. There is no Rawhead ejaculating in the face of Christianity and his inbred misogamy, the baby eating? Well you've got to get it past the BBFC somehow.

So for a more intellectual appraisal of the subject matter, check out the story in Books of Blood III. But for 90 minutes of rampaging monster mutilations, high tail it down to your local video emporium.

The appearance of Rawhead is nicely done (a sort of ALIEN/MAD MAX hybrid) although the execution is a little rubbery at times. George Pavlou makes good use of the subject matter and keeps it trotting along at a good pace. And Rawhead? He'll be back!
P.H.